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THE PIONEER HISTORIES

EDITED BY V. T. HARLOW, D.LITT., AND J. A. WILLIAMSON, D.LIT.

THE AGE OF DRAKE

THE PIONEER HISTORIES

Edited by V. T. Harlow, D.Litt., & J. A. Williamson, D.Lit.

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IN THE WEST INDIES**

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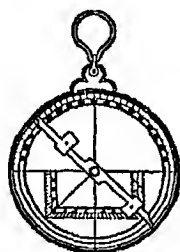
THE AGE OF DRAKE,

by

JAMES A. WILLIAMSON

M.A., D.LIT.

AUTHOR OF 'SIR JOHN HAWKINS, THE TIME AND THE MAN'
'VOYAGES OF THE CABOTS,' ETC.



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EDITORS' PREFACE TO THE SERIES

THE Pioneer Histories are intended to provide broad surveys of the great migrations of European peoples—for purposes of trade, conquest and settlement—into the non-European continents. They aim at describing a racial expansion which has created the complex world of to-day, so nationalistic in its instincts, so internationalised in its relationships.

International affairs now claim the attention of every intelligent citizen, and problems of world-wide extent affect the security and livelihood of us all. He who would grasp their meaning and form sound judgements must look into the past for the foundations of the present, and, abandoning a local for a universal perspective, must take for his study the history of a world invaded by European ideas. Thus, the swiftly changing face of Europe in our own day must be interpreted by reference to such questions as that of France's eastern frontier inherited from Richelieu and Louis XIV, the militarism of Germany derived from Frederick the Great, and the Balkan entanglement which originated with the medieval migrations of Slavonic peoples and with the Turkish conquests of the fourteenth century. But the process must be carried further, for these ancient domestic difficulties in modern form cannot properly be estimated except by correlation with the problems of a Europeanised outer world.

The Orient is in ferment and Asiatic difficulties compel the attention of Europe because long ago the Portu-

EDITORS' PREFACE TO THE SERIES

guese, followed by the Dutch and the English, rounded the Cape and came to India. For the same reason, Africa is no longer an unknown continent but a vast area in which civilised enterprise demands direction and control. Knowledge of the process by which North America was discovered and gradually filled with Europeans is the necessary basis for an understanding of the modern reactions upon each other of the new continent and the old. In South America the same process is to be seen at work, though incomplete while Nature is yet unsubdued. Similarly, it may be appreciated how the search for an unknown but credited continent lying about the South Pole has helped to shift the centre of gravity to the Pacific, and has created a white Australasia. The present series will show how the permanent factors in these great regions first presented themselves to European minds and how achievements were then effected which have governed all subsequent relationships.

But if the subject has this interest for students of affairs, it has also its appeal to those who dwell most on individual character, courage and ingenuity. Movements are made by men, and in these stories of European expansion are to be met men worth knowing, whose deeds carry inspiration for this generation as for all others.

Each volume takes for its subject the history of an important movement and, while related to others in the series, is thus complete in itself. Each study is designed to embody the most recent information available, and some will be found to deal with subjects of which no full treatment has hitherto been accessible in English.

V. T. HARLOW

J. A. WILLIAMSON

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE Elizabethan period has a charm of its own. It was in the springtime of modern history, when knowledge of mankind and of the wonders of earth and ocean was expanding so rapidly that every decade produced some new achievement in geographical discovery, some branch of commerce hitherto untried, or some fresh problem of straits or islands or virgin continents. The men of the age worked with a zest that surmounted great obstacles, and drew their stimulus from the glory of doing things that their fathers before them had never done. Their zest and their problems and their vivid personalities still live for us, made real by records that are full of human quality, and not yet so thoroughly exploited as to damp imagination and discourage further research.

But the age has a darker aspect, which strikes us of this generation as it could not strike our Victorian forbears. Elizabethan England was set in a dangerous world of ideologies and despots, persecution, treacherous propaganda, broken treaties, and war under pretence of peace. Every year brought its tale of cities sacked, provinces overrun, assassination instigated by princes, mass persecution of unhappy sects or breeds of men. No land was safe, not even insular England, and fear lurked beneath the high spirit and bold challenge with which Englishmen faced their perils. It is needless to draw the parallel. We are already in the sixteenth

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

century once more—and, unlike the Elizabethans, we have reached it by going backward. The adventures of the age may serve us for delight; its diplomacy and wars carry instruction. If Burghley and Walsingham and the Queen could come again to rule, they would look round and take their bearings and feel that it was still the old trade that they were called upon to ply.

In the following pages I have sought to combine the knowledge revealed by the research of many scholars. In recent years new material has been discovered in almost every field of Elizabethan enterprise, and the effect has been to recast and almost revolutionise some parts of the story and very considerably to modify our conception of the whole. Many of the new facts and interpretations are not yet widely known, and in the footnotes I have indicated where they are to be found and have acknowledged my debt to those whose labours have rendered possible the writing of this account.

J. A. WILLIAMSON

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THE AGE OF DRAKE

CHAPTER I

THE PRELUDE TO THE AGE

BETWEEN the death of Henry VIII and the accession of Elizabeth England experienced the most miserable decade of an unhappy generation. Misfortunes, actual and threatened, oppressed her people, and it seemed that ruin was near. She found courage and sought remedies, recovered slowly and then rapidly, and after half a century earned the respect and not the mockery of civilised Europe. The maritime aspect of the resurgence is the subject of this book, but first a brief treatment of the depression is necessary.

In effect it began some time before the death of Henry. The period 1540-70 was for this country the winter of the sixteenth century. The preceding fifty years had been prosperous, with order improving, trade flourishing and the stability of the State established. But Henry's breach with the Church of Rome coincided with other changes to introduce a time of danger. The output of silver from Spanish mines in the West affected all European countries and England not least. Prices rose and old contracts needed revision. The dissolution of the monasteries caused the change to be rapidly and unjustly effected. The new owners of land demanded profit. They raised rents and evicted the customary tenants who could not pay. They enclosed commons and deprived the peasant of part of his livelihood. They converted ploughland into pasture which employed

fewer hands. The enterprising men who thus made fortunes were looked upon as upstarts; and the cleavage thus arising was accentuated by religious differences, for it was often the newly enriched who were Protestants, while the old families remained Catholics. Among the people the change produced alarming discontent, pauperism and vagrancy. Until well on in Elizabeth's reign the problem of the unemployed 'wandering idly up and down for lack of honest entertainment' exercised the minds of reformers and moved men like Hakluyt and Raleigh to preach colonisation as the remedy.

War increased the economic difficulties. It seemed likely that Henry VIII's independence of Rome would need to be fought for. A religious war almost broke out in 1538-39 when Charles V and Francis I discussed the invasion of England and the restoration of papal authority. Henry bought off the Emperor and spent large sums on the Navy; and although the spoils of the Church helped to pay for the defence of the realm, the King's resources were strained. When war with France and Scotland actually broke out in 1543, the English arms were successful, but the expense was ruinous. The Emperor, who had been Henry's ally, made a separate peace and left him to fight unaided. The new Navy served him well, and in 1545 a French invasion was foiled by actions at Spithead. The bloodshed was slight, but the cost was very great.

With the rise of strong national states warfare was entering on a new phase. The ships of the new fleets were specially built and paid for by the State, and they were armed with costly guns and ammunition. Armies also had changed. The peasant soldier armed with his own bow or pike and living on the countryside was out

of date. The State now had to find firearms and siege-trains and to pay heavy bills for victualling if its armies were to fight opponents similarly equipped. Henry VIII's short war of 1543-46 brought him in sight of bankruptcy and reduced him to debasing the coinage and raising loans at 10 per cent. It was followed by other wars under Edward VI and Mary, with a steady decay of England's finances and decline of her fighting forces.

These misfortunes alone would have crippled trade, but they were complicated by something worse. The old trading system rested on the exports of raw wool and manufactured cloth, and these exports provided work for a great part of the population, since spinning and weaving were peasant industries carried on throughout the land. The principal customers for English woollens were the Netherlands and Germany and Spain. France imported little from England, for she had a cloth industry of her own. Henry VII, opening the sound policy of the Tudor period, had made alliances and commercial treaties with Spain and the Netherlands; and since they were based upon permanent interests these agreements were enduring. For fifty years they had ensured England's political security and economic prosperity. In due course the two alliances became one, for in 1519 Charles V was King of Spain, sovereign of the Netherlands (the Emperor's Low Countries), and overlord of Germany and Italy. So long as England remained friendly with him her markets were safe and her wealth increased. The defiance of Rome, in so many ways crucial in our national fortunes, produced the first rift. The Emperor supported the Pope, and his Spaniards hated the new heresy. In 1538 English traders in Spain found themselves in a hostile

country and were persecuted by the Inquisition. For the time the threat passed and the dispute was patched up, but it was a warning of much that was to come.

The first real blow at the ancient trades was struck by the Emperor's peace with France in the war of 1544. English privateers were scouring the seas when the Spaniards and Flemings, who had hitherto been their allies, became neutrals. As neutrals they carried French goods, and the English refused to admit the cover of the flag and claimed that enemy goods were fair prize in neutral bottoms. The privateers were not scrupulous and took even more than their own doctrine allowed them—one captain cruised off Cape St. Vincent and captured a Spanish treasure-ship from the West Indies with no French goods on board. The Emperor retaliated. In 1545 he arrested all English merchants in Spain and the Netherlands and prohibited trade with his former ally. This arrest, more than any other single event, broke up the prosperity of English trade which had prevailed since the beginning of the Tudor period. The stoppage lasted for more than a year, and when it ended property had been lost, the merchants were ruined, and their Hanse competitors were firmly established in their trades. The only gainers on the English side were the freebooters of the seas, and that was a circumstance significant of much that was to happen in the future.

Within a year of the peace Henry was dead and the country entered upon the disastrous minority of Edward VI. An unscrupulous group surrounded the Protector Somerset and his successor the Duke of Northumberland. They followed Henry's example of seizing the monastic lands by confiscating the property of the

chantries. But they did not, like Henry, spend the proceeds on the Navy and coast defence; they shared them amongst themselves. For six years there was scandalous profiteering and disregard of public rights, confusion in finance, decay of the fleet and mismanagement of foreign affairs. The national prestige declined and trade went from bad to worse. The people hated this government, which was virtually an interregnum. They rebelled against agrarian injustice and the excesses of the Protestant faction which raised its head under Somerset's patronage. Northumberland supplanted Somerset and carried on the administration from 1549 to 1553. No ruler of England was ever more unpopular than he, and when the boy-king died public opinion was unanimous in overthrowing the Duke and welcoming Mary Tudor to the throne. The rule of a woman was an untried experiment, but at least she was Henry's daughter and the enemy of the gang in power.

The experiment was not a success. A more reputable band surrounded the throne and the plunder of public property was stayed, but little was done to initiate recovery from the great depression. Mary had two aims which her people disliked, to restore the Pope's jurisdiction and to marry the Emperor's son, Philip of Spain. By her religious policy she forfeited her early popularity. Although only a minority of her people were Protestants it is equally true that only a minority desired submission to Rome. The majority liked the old forms of worship but wished their Church to be insular and free from foreign control. Henry's attitude had coincided with theirs, but his daughter's did not. And when to restoration of the papal power she added the burning of Protestants the victims became popular for the first time. The Spanish marriage was equally a blunder. Alliance

with Spain had been valuable when conducted by Henry VII and Henry VIII, for it had been an alliance on equal terms in which England gained as much as she gave. The marriage of Mary was not an equal alliance. It made Philip in fact as well as in name King of England, and it made his kingdom a pawn of the Hapsburg empire. As a pawn he used it in his war with Valois France, and although he gained his ends in the war, England suffered nothing but loss. When Mary's life ended in 1558 Spain and Rome were alike unpopular and the long depression seemed at its worst.

Yet to men of vision the prospect offered hope. Trade with Europe was declining, but there were enterprises in new trades farther afield. Russia and northern Asia, the west coast of Africa, the Spanish possessions in the Caribbean, the tropical East, even the unknown waters of the Pacific—all these were coming or were soon to come into the calculations of adventurers. Another possibility was in colonisation, and ere long the minds of some men were to turn to the temperate regions unpossessed as yet by other nations, where settlements might be planted to employ the distressed and open new markets for English wares.

These were to be the fields of action in the coming age, but it would be wrong to suppose that the incentive was only the hope of gain. There were also moral factors. Henry VIII had been able to defeat the Pope only because there was a deep anti-clerical sentiment among the people. For generations men had endowed churches and founded chantries while at the same time they had disliked the clergy, and especially the foreign clergy who were influential in the English Church. Conservative in doctrine, they desired reform in jurisdiction, and thus they supported Henry in his Act of Supremacy and

aided him to confiscate monastic property without considering themselves to be on the road to Protestantism. This policy could not last. Under Edward VI the government became Protestant, to the distaste of the majority. Under Mary the continental Church recovered power, still more to their distaste, and the burning of three hundred Protestant martyrs bespoke a tyranny which free England had hitherto seen only overseas.

The country was shocked and the effect was revolutionary. A new English Protestantism came rapidly into being. Under Elizabeth the English people defined in lasting form its attitude towards the Church, its essence being that the clergy are the servants and not the masters of the community. Then began that liberty from clerical domination which the laity never tamely surrendered in after times. Passion for the new-found liberty supplied the fighting spirit of the age of Drake. It is breathed in the words of almost every narrative and project of the adventurers. The insular Protestantism became a function of patriotism, for the continent did not acquiesce. It launched the Counter-Reformation for the universal restoration of Rome, and England realised that unless she was steadfast her liberty would be lost. To open new trades, plant colonies or capture treasure-ships at the expense of Spain and Portugal meant not only increasing England's wealth but disabling those who would steal her liberty. And so the adventurers sailed happy in the belief that to enrich themselves was a righteous act. The Elizabethan captains were for the most part not pirates in contemporary eyes but respectable and representative Englishmen, respected even by their Spanish foes. Ethics are largely contemporary, and standards vary from age to age. Drake and his fellows did much that would be wrong now, but even his critics

did not think it wrong then, although it might be inexpedient.

Prosperity, religion and liberty were to be the incentives of English action, and they were ultimately to be achieved after a struggle with Spain. It should be remembered, however, that the accession of Elizabeth did not mark the beginning of the anti-Spanish period. The turning-point came ten years later. Spain was unpopular in 1558 for having dragged England into a disastrous war, but on the death of his wife Philip ceased to be King of England and the active grievance passed. It was possible for men to hope that a share in the wealth of the tropics might be peacefully gained. The Counter-Reformation also had not yet begun. Five years were to elapse before the Council of Trent should demand an uncompromising Protestant submission, and the religious wars of the continent had not yet broken out. To most men England's peril was not from Spain and Rome but from Scotland and France. The country had just been delivered from Mary Tudor and a Spanish king only to be threatened with Mary Stuart and a French one; for she, while claiming England, was married to Francis II. Elizabeth alone stood between England and foreign bondage, and the prospect was dark. A contemporary expressed it in words that have been quoted by Froude:

"The queen poor; the realm exhausted; the nobility poor and decayed; good captains and soldiers wanting; the people out of order; justice not executed; all things dear; excesses in meat, diet and apparel; division among ourselves; war with France; the French king bestriding the realm, having one foot in Calais and the other in Scotland; steadfast enemies, but no steadfast friends. . . . If God start not forth to the helm we be at the point of

THE PRELUDE TO THE AGE

greatest misery that can happen to any people, which is to become thrall to a foreign nation'.

'Under God' Elizabeth and William Cecil took the helm, and some pretty seamanship carried the ship of State through that preliminary foul weather.

CHAPTER II

FIRST ATTEMPTS AT EXPANSION

IN the late fifteenth century England was mildly stirred by the first flush of the geographical renaissance. The Portuguese, after creeping slowly down the African coast and reaching the equator, launched forth boldly and sought the new and more ambitious goal of the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope. Columbus led the Spaniards to the parallel conception of a voyage to the Far East by way of the West. Certain Englishmen, and notably the merchants of Bristol, were ready for a similar up-to-date enterprisc, and John Cabot the Venetian led them to North America, which he believed to be the mainland of Cathay. The belief soon proved to be erroneous, but it was succeeded by another, much longer lived and more formative of history, that round or through Cabot's New Found Land a channel to Cathay would be discovered—the North West Passage, of which the quest was to continue for centuries. Sebastian Cabot, the son of John, led an expedition under Henry VII in which, as he himself believed, he found the Passage but was prevented by mutiny from following it to his Asiatic goal. He had probably penetrated to Hudson's Bay, which he mistook for the Pacific.

Thenceforward English enthusiasm dwindled for a generation. Henry VIII was fitfully keen for exploration, but politics kept it always a side issue. Politics

bound him to respect the interests of Charles V, who as King of Spain would have been aggrieved by any solid English competition in the New World. English trade flourished in the early Tudor time by virtue of the Hapsburg alliance, and the London merchants took the short view and refused to exchange the substance for the shadow. In 1521, when Henry proposed that they should finance a company for a national effort on the ocean, they protested that any success would arouse jealousy from Spain and Portugal and imperil their existing European business. Some ten years later, when Robert Thorne, merchant of Bristol, collaborated with Roger Barlow to write *The Declaration of the Indies*, the seed fell on completely barren ground. The *Declaration* comprised a plan for empire-building in the Pacific, to be reached by a northern passage, but it was pigeon-holed or perhaps never even considered. On the academic side the interest was equally feeble. One or two scholars like Sir Thomas More and his brother-in-law John Rastell wrote of the unknown continents, but the output was tiny as compared with that of Spain, Portugal, Italy and even inland Germany. No one troubled to chronicle the Cabot voyages, whose details are for the most part lost. No one published in England the histories of Spanish achievement which were eagerly bought by the reading public on the continent. No English cartographer produced for his own people the new maps which were revolutionising conceptions of the earth's surface. Prosperity was the excuse for indolence.

Out of misfortune came enterprise. The great depression of the mid-century and the coldness that grew in English relations with the Hapsburg states made new markets for English wares a pressing need.

first time politics became favourable to oceanic enterprise.

As a first step the men who governed in the name of Edward VI looked for an expert adviser, and found one in Sebastian Cabot. He was by this time an old man who, since leaving England in 1512, had spent thirty-five years in the service of Spain. He had risen to the rank of Pilot-Major, or senior officer of the Spanish mercantile marine, and knew as much as any man about geography, exploration and the Spanish colonial empire. Tempted by English offers, he left the service of Charles V without permission and came to England towards the close of 1548. He claimed to have discovered the North West Passage forty years previously. He was probably consulted about the commercial advantages of various regions of the world of which England was then very ignorant. About 1552 (the date is not established) the Duke of Northumberland discussed with him a proposal for an attack upon Peru in conjunction with the French corsairs. It seems that the approach was to have been made by ascending the Amazon. Geographically the route was just feasible, but the difficulties were so great as to demand a leader of unusual prowess. Whether Cabot advised against it, or whether the fall of Northumberland in 1553 prevented it, is unknown, but the scheme was dropped. All we know of it is from a letter in which Cabot himself reported the matter to the Emperor in Mary's reign, when anti-Spanish projects were no longer countenanced.

Meanwhile an enterprise in the eastern Atlantic was taking shape, and there is some indication that Cabot had a hand in it. In 1551 a syndicate of London merchants including Sir John Lutterell and Henry Ostrich, chartered a ship for a voyage to Morocco. It is note-

worthy that Ostrich was Cabot's son-in-law, and that James Alday, the seaman appointed to command the expedition, was in Cabot's service. Cabot himself no doubt had full information about the Atlantic coast of Morocco, which was frequented by both Portuguese and Spaniards. The English voyage was the pioneer effort in a trade that afterwards became permanent and lucrative, but the original promoters met with disaster. A great epidemic of the sweating sickness ravaged London. Lutterell, Ostrich and other members of the syndicate died, and James Alday fell seriously ill. Before his recovery the ship sailed under a new captain, Thomas Wyndham. He had already made a name as a naval officer and had been vice-admiral of the fleet employed by the Protector Somerset in his Scottish campaign of 1547. He had also made himself obnoxious to the Portuguese by his piracies against their ships in the waters of Western Europe. His new expedition was undoubtedly patronised by the English government, for he took with him to Morocco two noble Moors who for some reason undisclosed were then in England, one of them being of the royal blood. With their introduction he traded successfully at the Moroccan port of Santa Cruz and returned in the same year. It was the beginning of a long English connection with Morocco and the first fruit of the new policy of expansion.

The London merchants were elated, and Wyndham was despatched again in 1552 by a strong syndicate comprising Sir John Yorke, Sir William Gerard, Sir Thomas Wroth, Francis Lambert, and other leading men in the City. This time there were three ships and 120 men, representing a considerable capital investment. Wyndham traded at Santa Cruz and also at Zafia, where he spent three months and laded rich

cargoes of sugar, molasses, dates and almonds. The English goods disposed of are known to have included cloth, hardware, firearms and copies of the Old Testament for the Jews of Morocco, who had the commerce of that country in their hands. The Portuguese, hitherto the monopolists of the Morocco trade, lodged strong complaints against this propagation of heresy and also about the sale of arms to the infidel. On his homeward passage Wyndham called at the Canary Islands, but this was no new departure in commerce. English merchants had long been trading with the Canaries which, as a Spanish possession previous to 1489, were included in the Spanish dominions thrown open to English trade by the commercial treaty negotiated by Henry VII in that year. Wyndham voyaged no more to Morocco, but other Englishmen did in considerable numbers. They established resident factors in the country, and by the middle of Elizabeth's reign were doing more valuable business there than with Portugal herself, whose monopoly they had so successfully invaded.

From Morocco the London men extended their ventures to the tropical coast of Africa. Already under Henry VIII several voyages to the Grain Coast (Liberia) had been made by William Hawkins of Plymouth. He had obtained pepper and ivory but apparently no gold. Wyndham's syndicate now prepared a voyage to the Gold Coast, for which they could command the services of a pilot named Antonio Pinteado, a Portuguese seaman of repute who had deserted his own country and offered his knowledge to the English. The Gold Coast, which lay beyond Cape Palmas, was a more difficult region than any that lay short of it. The prevailing wind, together with the Guinea current, pressed a vessel

eastwards into the Bight of Benin. Outward coasting was easy, return coasting almost impossible. The only means of escape from this coast was to haul off southwards out of the flow of the current but into the belt of equatorial calms, whence it was a matter of luck how long it would take a ship to make her westing into the open Atlantic. And since the crews were generally infected with fever before they quitted the coast, the tedious homeward passage was commonly fatal to the majority of those on board.

Accompanied by Pinteado, Wyndham sailed in 1553. Although he left Portsmouth a month after Edward VI was succeeded by Queen Mary, his venture must be accounted one of those promoted by the administration of Northumberland in pursuit of his policy of trade expansion. Two of Wyndham's three ships were lent from the Navy, and preparations must have begun before the change of sovereigns. The merchants who subscribed the capital were the same as had financed the previous Morocco voyage, with the addition of Sir George Barnes. The expedition touched at the Grain Coast and then rounded Cape Palmas. Henceforward profits and danger increased together. The Portuguese had a fort at Elmina, but Wyndham avoided that place and traded with the negroes on either side of it. After obtaining the available supplies of gold he determined to go on eastwards to Benin to lade pepper. Pinteado demurred on the ground that it was too late in the season, but after a violent dispute Wyndham compelled him to guide the ships to the Niger delta. Its climate proved deadly. Wyndham and many others died. The rest abandoned one of the ships and sailed away under the conduct of Pinteado. He also died, and in 1554 forty fever-stricken survivors reached England

out of one hundred and forty who had set out in the previous year. But the gold, ivory and pepper yielded a dazzling profit to the investors.

One of the forty was a boy named Martin Frobisher, an orphan from Yorkshire who had been sent south to the care of his London kinsman Sir John Yorke. Young Frobisher was a rough diamond, burly, quarrelsome and unscrupulous, and so he remained through life. His education was flimsy—his few extant letters are in the most excruciating spelling that the time can show—and Sir John must have judged that the counting-house offered no career; so off he was sent to sea with Wyndham. The initiation was terrible, but he survived. He was a born survivor, blustering his cantankerous way through forty more years of perils, until at last the luck turned, and a Spanish bullet killed him.

While Wyndham had been preparing to sail to the Gold Coast the merchants who equipped him were also launching a more ambitious undertaking in search of the North East Passage to Asia. The project took shape in the winter of 1552–53 under the patronage of the Duke of Northumberland. The original roll of the adventurers is lost, but we have a list of two years later date. It includes among a membership of about 200 persons the names of Sir George Barnes, Sir William Gerard and Sir John Yorke, already concerned with the African trade; of Sir, Andrew Judde, Rowland Hayward and Miles Mordeyne, who promoted later African voyages; and of the Marquis of Winchester, the Earls of Arundel, Bedford and Pembroke, Lord William Howard (the Lord Admiral), Sir William Cecil and Sir Thomas Gresham, representing the court and government interest. These men were organised as a joint-stock company with a patent of incorporation

from Edward VI.¹ They were styled The Merchants Adventurers of England for the Discovery of Lands, Territories, Isles, Dominions and Seignories Unknown, and they were granted the monopoly of making such discoveries in any regions lying to the North East, North and North West. The joint capital to be raised amounted to £6000 in £25 shares. Sebastian Cabot, the protégé of Northumberland and 'chiefest setter forth of this journey or voyage', was appointed the Company's Governor for life.

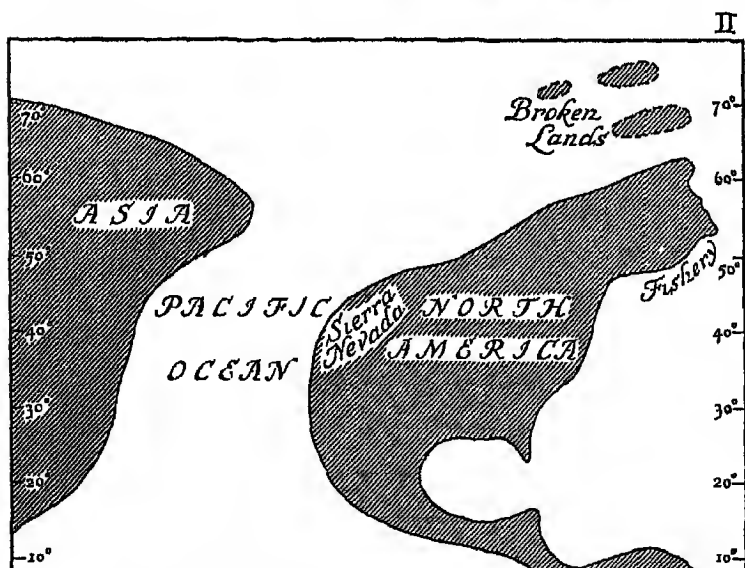
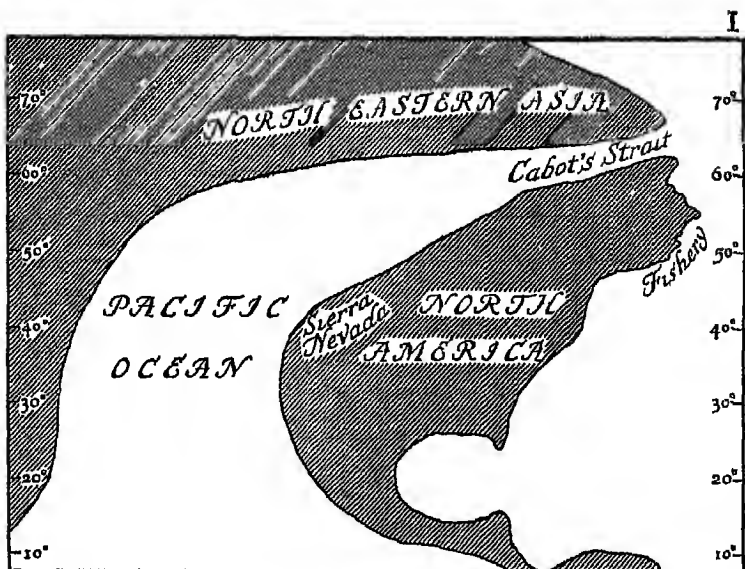
The area of the monopoly, it may be noted, included the North West as well as the North East. Sebastian Cabot claimed that as a young man he had discovered the North West Passage. Nevertheless the Company under his governorship despatched its first expedition to the North East. It may be that his claim was distrusted, but a more likely explanation is to be drawn from the conception of northern geography then prevalent. The entrance of Cabot's Passage (almost certainly Hudson's Strait) was in latitude 61° – 64° , but the northern shore of America was thought to trend south-westwards until it rounded an obtuse angle to join the coast of California in 40° , the Sierra Nevada (a name then in use) being located at the angle. This American shore would be on the left hand of an explorer entering the North West Passage from the Atlantic. On his right hand he would have the coast of Asia, forming the opposite side of the strait, trending also roughly south-westwards, but diverging somewhat from the American side, so that the Passage broadened out insensibly into the Pacific Ocean. An expedition using this route would

¹ Edward's patent has not been preserved, but a contemporary reference indicates that it established the same organisation of Governor, Consuls and Assistants as is elaborated in the extant patent of Philip and Mary, 1555.

thus be brought into the temperate and tropical latitudes of the Pacific, and might expect to reach China, Japan and the Spice Islands, where rich merchandise would be obtained.¹ But the pressing need of the time was not primarily to obtain silks and spices but rather to sell cloth and so provide employment for the starving, rebellious people of England. Sebastian Cabot, with his unrivalled knowledge of tropical commerce gathered during his thirty years service as Pilot-Major of Spain, was the technical adviser, and he must have known that heavy English cloth found no market in China and the Moluccas. The requisite customer was a population dwelling in a harsher climate; and the northern coast of Asia suggested itself as giving access to such a population. A North East Passage, therefore, was most likely to provide an immediate sale of cloth, transmitted to the centre of Asia through its northern seaports. But, on the conception outlined above, to reach the Pacific by this North East Passage would be a long way round, a much less direct route than by the North West—and the tropics of the Pacific were a desirable, if secondary, objective. Here we come into contact with another influence not less important than that of Sebastian Cabot.

Just as Cabot knew all that the men of his own age had done in exploration and distant trade, so John Dee knew all that the men of past ages had written on those subjects. His reading of classical and medieval authorities was exhaustive, and from it he derived a modification of the map of Northern Asia laid down by Gemma Frisius. Dee's Northern Asia did not jut as an acute

¹ This is, broadly, the conception of Gemma Frisius, the most eminent authority in the mid-sixteenth century. He named the Passage *Fortum Trium Fratrum*, which may be an allusion to Sebastian Cabot and his two brothers Ludovico and Sancio.



TWO THEORIES OF THE RELATIONS OF AMERICA & ASIA

c. 1550

I. Sebastian Cabot's view. II. John Dee's view

angle north-eastwards to the Atlantic. It trended round southwards into the Pacific, as America was thought to do. On Dee's conception the North East Passage was as good a way to the Pacific as the North West, and it gave access to excellent cloth-markets as one followed it through. In 1552-53 John Dee was already a man of weight. He had studied at Cambridge, and then at Louvain and Paris, and was just home with a European reputation as mathematician and geographer. The Duke of Northumberland valued his talents and made him the friend and teacher of his sons. There can be no doubt that Dee was consulted on the forthcoming expedition, more especially as Richard Chancellor, the brilliant seaman appointed as its chief pilot and navigator, was his close friend.

Here, then, in the light of recent research,¹ we have the plans of the new national company. There were two unexploited ways to Asia, by the North West and the North East. The Company's monopoly covered both, but economic reasons dictated the North East as the path of the first effort. If it did not turn out well, there would remain the North West, which the disciples of Sebastian Cabot regarded as a thing already accomplished. Richard Eden, one of them, wrote in 1553 that the *Fretum Trium Fratrum* was, 'sufficiently known to such as have any skill in Geography'. There is no evidence of any dissension between Dee and Cabot. Both believed in the practicability of either passage; and Cabot accepted the necessity for the north-eastern route and did his best as Governor to make the venture successful.

¹ For the doctrines of Gemma Frisius, and the career and influence of Dee, see Prof. E. G. R. Taylor's *Tudor Geography*, 1485-1583 (London, 1930), a work to which the present writer acknowledges his deep indebtedness.

The expedition sailed in May 1553, not long before the death of Edward VI. In command of the three ships was Sir Hugh Willoughby, a soldier of some distinction, while Richard Chancellor went as chief pilot and second in command. A storm on the Norwegian coast separated them. Willoughby with two of the ships rounded the North Cape and sailed on eastwards until he discovered the coast of Nova Zembla in 72° . It was then August, and the season was far spent. Willoughby returned to the coast of Lapland, where he determined to winter and continue the discovery next year. He was well supplied with victuals, and his men were in good health. But the Arctic winter killed every one of them. Next summer Russian fishermen found the ships at their anchors with the bodies on board, but it was not until 1555 that the news reached England. Later English travellers were of opinion that Willoughby's fate was ascribable to want of experience in attempting to survive the winter in the ships instead of making snow houses; but very likely scurvy had something to do with it.

Richard Chancellor, in the *Edward Bonaventure*, having parted company with his chief, called at Vardo, the agreed port of rendezvous. Not meeting Willoughby there, he pursued the discovery independently. He found the entrance of a south-trending gulf now called the White Sea. He must have had little reason to suppose that it was a passage leading to Cathay, but it might well lead to a market for English cloth, and he therefore explored it. At its southern end he found the Russian village of Archangel, and there wintered his ship. The Russian Empire was known by vague report, but it is improbable that any Englishman¹ had yet set

¹ That is to say, any Englishman of the period under discussion. Chaucer's Knight of the fourteenth century had travelled and fought in Russia.

foot in it. It had then no coasts on either the Baltic or the Black Sea, and its only contact with Europe had been by the agency of the Hanseatic League, which worked a trade route from Riga to Novgorod and Moscow. The League made unsparing use of its monopoly, charging the Russians high prices for European goods and carefully excluding any but its own people from access to Russia.

Chancellor, landing at Archangel and journeying south to Moscow, learned these things and saw his opportunity. He had an interview with the Czar Ivan the Terrible and produced his credentials, the letters of Edward VI directed to all princes on the road to Cathay. Ivan received him well and granted leave for English merchants to trade in Russia on favourable terms. Chancellor's discovery had turned the Hanse position, to the mutual benefit of England and Russia. He returned to England with the *Edward Bonaventure* in the summer of 1554.

During his absence the English scene had changed. On the death of Edward VI the Duke of Northumberland attempted to change the succession in favour of his daughter-in-law Lady Jane Grey. The English people would have none of it. They hated the Duke and his supporters and called Mary Tudor to the throne; and one of her first acts was to execute Northumberland. When Chancellor returned the country was excited with the preparations for Mary's marriage to Philip II, shortly to be King of Spain and the Netherlands by the retirement of his father Charles V. Northumberland on many grounds deserved his fate. He had plundered England and gambled with her peace, and no man has ever done more to lower the tone of public life and destroy the tradition of unselfish service. But there is this

to be said for him, that he sought on broad lines a remedy for the economic distresses of the time. The expansion which is typically Elizabethan was set on foot by him, and it was so well started as to survive some discouragement in the reign of Philip and Mary.

That stout-hearted Bristol seaman Richard Chancellor, whom Dee admired as mathematician and astronomer, who could fashion instruments of precision as well as use them, and who had played the skilled ambassador at the barbaric court of Moscow, went again to the White Sea in 1555. There he learned Willoughby's fate and recovered his papers. Instead of returning with the ships that summer he stayed in Russia negotiating with the Czar, organising the trade, and seeking information about the unknown northern coasts that must be followed to reach Cathay. In 1556 he sailed for home in his old ship the *Edward Bonaventure*. It was a terrible autumn in the northern seas. One of his consorts gave up the voyage, and two were lost with all hands. The *Edward* met her fate on the east coast of Scotland where, on 10th November, she was wrecked at Pitsligo. Chancellor was drowned. A Russian ambassador was saved and eventually reached London, the first representative of his sovereign to be seen there.

In the same year 1556 the Company made another attempt to probe the North East Passage. It equipped a pinnace named the *Serchthrift* under the command of Stephen Borough, another seaman of considerable scientific attainments. Sebastian Cabot went down to Gravesend to wish them god-speed, and Borough has left a charming description of 'the good old gentleman' inspecting the vessel, giving alms to the poor, banqueting the crew at the sign of the Christopher, and taking

part in the dance which followed the repast. Next year he died. Borough worked eastwards from the White Sea as far as the island of Vaigats, when bad weather compelled him to return. The Samoyedes of this coast were poor and barbarous and offered no prospect of an extension of the cloth trade.

The Company, while not giving up hopes of an ultimate discovery of Cathay, concentrated its energies on Russia, where it carried on a profitable business. For this reason it became commonly known as the Russia or Muscovy Company, although its official style remained that under which it has been first described. Soon after Philip II had been installed as King-consort of England he and his wife issued a new charter in the same general terms as those devised by Northumberland in the name of Edward VI. The fact that Philip lent his authority to an English enterprise for discovery in the North West as well as the North East raises an interesting point; for it implies that he did not consider English voyages to the North West an infringement of the monopoly granted to Spain by the Bulls of Alexander VI in 1493. Those famous instruments defined very obscurely the concession they allotted to Spain. It was to be the exclusive right to heathen lands lying west and south of a meridian passing through the Atlantic beyond the Azores. There were two views of what it might mean: either everything west of the meridian, neglecting the word 'south' as incompatible with sense; or everything west of the meridian and south of the parallel of the Azores, excluding from the privilege any lands in more northerly latitudes.¹ Official Spanish maps of the early

¹ A somewhat similar arrangement was verbally agreed to by the negotiators at the Peace of Câteau Cambrésis, wherein the Lines of Amity, beyond which breach of the treaty should not be a cause of war in Europe, were

sixteenth century emphasise the former view, for they draw the line of demarcation well up into the Arctic. Yet here we find Philip in 1555 yielding to the interpretation less favourable to Spain. It is hardly possible that so important a patent was issued without his knowledge and consent. It would seem that he stretched a point in favour of his new kingdom. Perhaps he could not do otherwise, for the Company was a national concern and already had the concession from Edward VI. However, a precedent was established, and in the coming Elizabethan period the English government, while refusing the sanction of its letters patent to enterprises south of the Azores, granted patents freely for northern projects. This rule held good until England was actually at war with the combined crowns of Spain and Portugal.

The change from the rule of Northumberland to that of Philip and Mary had greater consequences for the African trade than for the Russian, although there was some delay before they became apparent. Philip arrived in England in the summer of 1554, and in October Sir John Yorke and Sir George Barnes, together with Thomas Lok, Anthony Hickman and Edward Castlyn, despatched another expedition to the Gold Coast. Whether they had any official authorisation, as Wyndham's voyage undoubtedly had, we do not know, but they certainly had no patent of incorporation. If there had been any chance of obtaining one they would probably have asked for it. The merchants named above are those known to have invested in the voyage. There are many indications that the published names in such ventures were those of a managing committee, in

fixed as the meridian of the westernmost of the Canaries and the parallel constituted by the Tropic of Cancer. See Prof. A. P. Newton in *History*, vol. xix, p. 199.

modern parlance the directors of a company, and that a larger number of shareholders stand unidentified in the background. It seems clear that the African undertaking was just as representative of the Court and the City as was the Russian business, but that for diplomatic reasons it had to be conducted without the royal *imprimatur*. The second Gold Coast expedition was commanded by John Lok. He and his brother Thomas and his more famous brother Michael were the sons of Sir William Lok, merchant and alderman of London in the reign of Henry VIII. Hickman and Castlyn were London merchants who traded with the Canary Islands and maintained resident factors there. Martin Frobisher sailed again with Lok.

John Lok made a successful voyage and returned in 1555 with a rich lading which included 400 lb. of gold. The modern reader may be inclined to underestimate the importance of such a quantity. In reality it was very great, for gold was a much scarcer commodity then than now. Lok's haul represented a dazzling profit, and the shareholders must have considered themselves lucky men. They were the same persons who were financing the more sober export of cloth to the White Sea and were struggling to regain lost markets in Germany and the Netherlands. The revival of their economic strength was effective in several directions. But their enterprise was not to continue unchallenged.

Some weeks before Lok's return Portugal sent an ambassador to lodge a complaint. He asserted that the whole Guinea coast was the possession of the crown of Portugal and that the English had no right to trespass upon it. He demanded the restitution of the gold, the prohibition of future voyages, and the surrender of any Portuguese subjects who, like Pinteado, might have

been assisting the interlopers. The merchants were summoned before the Privy Council to make their answer. They denied that they had traded in any possession of the King of Portugal. They had not met with any garrisons or officers of his. On the contrary, the negro chiefs of the coast were sovereign princes who assured them that they were not subjects of Portugal. The English trade in Africa, the merchants contended, was on exactly the same footing as that which they were carrying on with Europe and Asia (meaning, presumably, the White Sea); it was a commerce with independent peoples who were in amity with England: 'We be merchants who, by common usage of the world, do use traffique in all places of the world, as well Asia and Africa and Europa, and have never been restrained from resort to any places'.

The strong point in the merchants' reply was the denial that Portuguese jurisdiction in fact existed. It was substantially true. From Cape Verde to Benin the Guinea coast stretched for two thousand miles. Portugal had a fortress at Elmina and perhaps a few priests and factors scattered here and there, but the English had avoided contact with them. That is implicit in the ambassador's complaint, for if there had been any conflict between the expeditions and the officers of his King he would certainly have stated it. The merchants were relying on the doctrine that occupation must be visible and effective to constitute possession. By implication they were repudiating two other doctrines, the validity of the papal donation and the title of prior discovery.

In the early stages of the case Philip II was still in England, although he left for the Netherlands before judgment was pronounced. Nevertheless the decision was his, as appears from the subsequent correspondence

between himself and the Privy Council. The Council advised him that in their opinion the merchants were conducting a legitimate trade and ought not to be restrained. He replied with a command that the trade must be prohibited. The Queen, perhaps unwillingly, endorsed his decision, and a formal prohibition of all Guinea voyages was thereupon issued. There was no order to restore the gold already gained. That would have been too much. It was not in Philip's interest to impoverish England, which was substantially one of his realms. Had it not been for the importance of the principles involved, he would no doubt have approved of the trade. But the principles of the papal donation and the right by prior discovery were vital to Spain. If Englishmen might trade in Africa, why not in America? The French had long been harassing his colonies, and at all costs the English must be kept out of them. The concession to the Muscovy Company was as far as he could go.

Philip's prohibition was ineffective. He had yet to learn by long and sad experience that ships and guns were needed to patrol a coast, and a great many of them to patrol the coast of a continent. His own mere word had no power even to close English seaports. At the very time his order was issued a new Gold Coast expedition sailed under the command of William Towerson, and in the succeeding years Towerson and others regularly continued the trade. Some merchants indeed were stopped, probably because they had not secured the backing of influential persons. The others carried on the business with impunity. When Towerson set out for the third time in January 1558 his squadron included two good ships of the Queen's Navy, which proves beyond doubt that the Lord Admiral connived at the venture.

The influence of Philip, which lost Calais and forbade the tropical expansion and was without justice blamed for the burnings, was drawing to its close. In November the Queen died, and he ceased to be King of England. The country was exhausted, defeated and humiliated, but there were men who were determined to retrieve the disaster. It was the first merit of the new young Queen Elizabeth that she discerned the latent spirit, refused the protection of her brother-in-law, and threw herself upon the patriotism of her subjects. Foreigners thought her a fool, but time was to prove them wrong.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST YEARS OF ELIZABETH

AFTER the accession of Elizabeth the Gold Coast voyages continued, with the difference that the English government no longer prohibited them. In 1561 the Spanish ambassador wrote that Cecil had told him, 'The Pope had no right to partition the world and to give and take kingdoms to whomever he pleased'; and shortly afterwards he reported that the English were sending more and more ships round Cape Verde. Portugal tried the effect upon the new government of another formal complaint, delivered by a special envoy in the spring of 1561. After some exchange of arguments he received an assurance from Elizabeth that her subjects should be commanded not to trade with any part of Africa under the dominion and tribute of the King of Portugal. It was an answer capable of two interpretations, as the Portuguese soon discovered. English merchants contemplating voyages to Guinea were ordered to report their intentions to the Lord Admiral, by whom they were duly enjoined to observe the Queen's promise as above, after which they were at liberty to proceed. Elizabeth and Cecil had in fact adopted the contention advanced by the merchants in 1555, that the Guinea coast was not governed by Portugal; and in practice her prohibition meant only that Englishmen were not to visit Elmina, which in any case they could have had no desire to do. But they were

permitted and encouraged to trade with the negro chiefs on either side of that fortress, and even talked of setting up fortified stations of their own at places where they could discern no sign of Portuguese occupation.

In effect the Queen entered into the gold trade herself, not indeed as a private individual, but as the managing owner of the state fleet, the Queen's Navy. A good deal of nonsense has been written of Elizabeth's avaricious methods of enriching herself by setting the Navy to profitable enterprise, as if in some way she was filling her own pocket by hiring out the nation's ships-of-war. The fact is that the Queen was not a private individual and had no private fortune. In time of peace she made the ships of the Navy do something to earn their keep because their maintenance in idleness was a burden to the community, and the proceeds were received by her Treasurer of the Navy and by him expended on objects which would otherwise have been defrayed by the taxpayer. The royal trading ventures were on the same footing as the royal parsimony which has been so freely denounced, as if it were a demerit in a government to be sparing with its subjects' money.

In 1561 the Gold Coast venturers, among whom we now discern the names of Benjamin Gonson and Sir William Winter, respectively Treasurer and Surveyor of the Navy, secured the use of four of the royal ships. The Queen found all equipment and £500 towards victualling. The merchants paid the crews, provided the cargo and bore the cost of repairs, and undertook to hand over one-third of the profits arising. On other occasions the details varied, as when the merchants paid for the whole of the victualling and yielded one-sixth of the profits. But always the State, while claiming reimbursement for damage to the vessels, bore the risk of

their total loss.¹ The expedition of 1561, commanded by John Lok, suffered much misfortune by stress of weather, but contrived to make a profit of £3000. Others followed, often with loss of shipping, always with heavy casualties from scurvy and fever, but almost invariably with an ultimate profit to the investors; for the gold, ivory and vegetable products obtained in Guinea were so valuable that an expedition could afford to lose two ships out of three if the third could succeed in struggling home. It is no wonder that the seamen of those times were a desperate and unscrupulous set. Their lives were a gamble against odds, and the days of most were few and evil. A fair number in every crew were boys, and the great majority were under thirty. Few lived to middle age and the really ancient mariner must have been a rarity. There was no humanitarian protest against these conditions. Sickness was a visitation of God upon sinful men, and the few exceptional commanders who strove by wise measures to show that it was avoidable set an example that was not generally followed.

The Portuguese were of course dissatisfied, and in 1562 sent another ambassador to protest. He urged not only that his country's monopoly was valid by reason of prior discovery but also that her conquest and occupation of Guinea were effective. On this point Cecil was able to call an English witness. Martin Frobisher had sailed with John Lok in 1554 and had been captured by negroes who had handed him over to the Portuguese at Elmina. After some months' captivity he had been sent to Europe and liberated. He now testified that

A formal charter-party for an African voyage by the Queen's ship *Minion* is to be found in Lansdowne MSS. 113, ff. 9-17. Similar details can be reconstructed from references in other documents.

Elmina and a fort at Cape Tres Puntas were the only Portuguese possessions in Guinea and that their jurisdiction extended no farther than the range of their guns. The ambassador replied that visible forts and garrisons were not the only evidence of occupation; much of the conquest had been by peaceful conversion of the negroes to Christianity and not by force of arms, and in the regions which had willingly accepted the faith his sovereign displayed no force and exacted no tribute. It was of no avail. The Queen made a stonily logical answer: if the negroes were truly under the dominion of the King of Portugal, he could settle the matter himself by forbidding them to trade with the English. Meanwhile she would not debar her subjects from doing business wherever they were amicably received. It was the doctrine of effective occupation pushed to an extreme which the British Empire of after days would have found very inconvenient. But Elizabeth and Cecil were determined not to relinquish a profitable trade, and in the existing conditions they were not afraid of any reprisals that Portugal could make. Unhappy Portugal could not afford to declare war. Her most lucrative commerce was in the spices of the East, a proportion of which was sold in northern Europe from the distributing centre of Antwerp. The cargoes from Lisbon to Antwerp passed through the Channel and were at the mercy of the Queen's Navy. There are indications indeed that Cecil had it in mind that suitable pressure might induce Portugal to transfer the spice mart from Antwerp to London. The Spanish ambassador reported as much, but direct evidence of negotiations is lacking. One circumstance shows that the Queen and her minister thought it possible that they might ultimately change their African policy, for they

did not give the Guinea trade the sanction of incorporation under letters patent. Such would have been the obvious course but that a subsequent cancellation would have involved loss of prestige. Yet another Portuguese ambassador appeared in 1564, to be dismissed with the same answer.

The Muscovy Company had lost a brilliant servant by the death of Richard Chancellor. Shortly afterwards it replaced him by Anthony Jenkinson, an even more remarkable pioneer. Jenkinson, like Chancellor, had gained his early experience in the Levant, but he was a merchant rather than a seaman, and thus made his push to Asia by the land routes in preference to the North East Passage. He went to Russia in 1557 as the Company's chief representative, and in the following year set out from Moscow to work southwards to the Caspian Sea. From Astrakhan, the southern outpost recently conquered by the Czar, he crossed the Caspian and landed on its eastern shore. His object was to follow the ancient silk route through central Asia, which Marco Polo had traversed three centuries before. But the conditions had changed since Marco's time, and anarchy had replaced the mighty ascendancy of Kubla Khan. Jenkinson penetrated to Bokhara, where a three-months stay convinced him that trade with the farther East was impracticable. The whole country was held by a succession of robber chiefs and predatory tribes whose exactions would kill any commerce that tried to compete with the sea route of the Portuguese.

After a visit to England the explorer determined to probe in a new direction.¹ In 1562 he went to Astrakhan as before, and thence sailed southward to the Persian

¹ For a full account of these enterprises see Sir W. Foster, *England's Quest of Eastern Trade*, Pioneer Histories, 1933, ch. ii. and iii.

coast of the Caspian. He was well received by the Shah's officers, but did not at once succeed in opening a trade. In later years, however, the Muscovy Company carried on considerable business in Persia, where it marketed English cloth in exchange for valuable products from Southern Asia. But the trade was always precarious. Persian friendship was not to be relied upon, and there were pirates in the Caspian and robbers along the course of the Volga, together with unusual maritime perils on the voyage between the White Sea and England. All these took toll of the profits. The final blow came from the hostility of the Turks. The Englishmen from Russia were tapping a stream of trade that flowed normally to the Turkish seaports of the Levant. In 1579 the last English expedition found Persia invaded by a Turkish army which prohibited access. This was the end of the Muscovy Company's Asiatic trade, but it was also the stimulus to a new enterprise through the Levant which will be dealt with in a later chapter. Jenkinson did not accompany the later Persian expeditions, but performed worthy service as the Company's representative at the difficult court of Ivan the Terrible. His personal experience of central Asia had taught him that the Far East was only to be reached by the sea, and in his later years he advocated a new attempt upon the North East Passage.

Meanwhile men began to ask, what of the North West and of the *Fretum Trium Fratrum*? Sebastian Cabot had said that he had seen it, and his maps and writings existed and were known to scholars.¹ Gemma Frisius, the Flemish geographer, delineated the strait as attractively easy. Abraham Ortelius and Gerard Mercator,

¹ They do not now exist. The only extant map connected with his name is a planisphere of 1544 of which his authorship is doubtful.

also Flemings of high authority, believed in it, and also disbelieved in the possibility of the North East, where they held that the land trended too far into the Arctic to be rounded. Some Englishmen followed their opinion in opposition to Dee and the Muscovy men, and soon the North West school became predominant in English thought. The academic geographers must not lightly be dismissed as mere purveyors of guesswork. They had some evidence to go upon, obscure, defective and contradictory, and they did their best to disentangle the truth from it. Not they but their material must be blamed if the results were unsatisfactory. They did valuable service in stimulating the thirst for knowledge of strange countries among men who, while not themselves of the academic type, were well educated and able to appreciate the arguments of the learned.

One of these men was Sir Humphrey Gilbert, of an ancient Devonshire family. His father died early and his mother married again and gave birth to another famous son, Walter Raleigh. Gilbert was about twenty years of age at the accession of Elizabeth. He was already known to her, having been a member of her household in the dangerous period of Mary's reign. He had studied at Oxford and had more than the average man's acquaintance with books; but it would be a mistake to regard him as a prodigy of learning after the fashion of John Dee. His was primarily a life of action in which soldiering played a considerable part.

It was while on active service as a soldier that he made, so far as we know, his first contact with the men who were revolving plans of discovery. In 1562 the wars of religion broke out in France, and the Huguenots appealed to Elizabeth for aid. She sent small forces over to the French coast, and one of these occupied Le

Havre. In it served Gilbert, while a distinguished civilian was attached to the contingent in the person of Richard Eden.¹ These two undoubtedly foregathered, and the interest of their meeting lies in the fact that Eden was a link with Sebastian Cabot. He had been intimate with the old explorer in his last years and had talked of the North West. He had also published writings of his own under the titles of *A Treatise of the New India* and *The Decades of the New World*, translations of foreign works, to which he added reminiscences of Cabot and accounts of the Guinea voyages. In other respects the garrison at Le Havre was a gathering of practical geographers. For a generation the sea-captains of the place had been raiding the Spanish colonies in the West, and from such men Gilbert could learn much of the West Indies and America. The French themselves had plans for a colonial empire, and earlier in the year Coligny had sent out Jean Ribault to found a settlement in Florida.

Humphrey Gilbert came home from the war with two projects which alternately occupied his mind for the rest of his life. One was to raid the Spanish West in the manner of the Huguenots. The other was to open the North West Passage to Cathay. For the first the time was not yet ripe. England and Spain were officially on terms of friendship, strained it is true, but with the tradition of seventy years behind it. The national enemy of the early sixties was Catholic France under the leadership of the Guises, kinsmen of Mary Queen of Scots and promoters of her claim to Elizabeth's crown. To the project of Cathay there was no political obstacle, but all initiative lay under the hand of the Muscovy Company with its monopoly of discovery by the North

¹ *Cambridge Hist. of the British Empire*, vol. i, p. 54 (Prof. A. P. Newton).

West as well as the North East. It was a dead hand. Since Stephen Borough's little expedition of 1556 the Company had done nothing by sea. It was intent solely on its land routes through Russia, but it was jealous that no outsider should infringe its maritime privilege.

Gilbert made himself a member by buying shares in the Company. He had conferences with Anthony Jenkinson, although their motives differed, for Jenkinson was now a projector of the North East. But the Company could be moved neither by its distinguished servant nor by its well-connected shareholder. It would neither attempt new discoveries nor permit them to do so. Gilbert and Jenkinson debated their rival views before the Queen, but without effect. Between them the government would make no decision, and the Company sat tight upon its monopoly. It is curious that Cecil should have kept straining hounds in leash from an enterprise that was diplomatically harmless. The times were difficult, but when were they not so? The deterrent was probably that either captain would have needed financial aid.

The canvassing of the project had compelled Gilbert to study his brief and marshal his evidence. The result was his *Discourse for a Discovery for a new Passage to Cathay* (i.e. the North West Passage). Although not published until ten years later, it was written in 1565-1566 and circulated in manuscript among interested persons. There has been some tendency to excessive admiration of the scientific quality of this work, and it is pertinent to quote the conclusion of a high authority: 'His *Discourse*, sketched out in 1566, and gradually worked into shape during the next ten years, does not, however, prove its author so erudite as at first glance might appear. Some of his authorities could not have

been actually examined, since they contradict him, while the majority are quoted at second-hand from the compilations of Eden and Ramusio.¹ It may be added that some of his arguments also contradict one another, and that the reasoning is sometimes puerile and places far too great an emphasis upon unverified storics whose face-value Gilbert himself would have declared to be small had they told against him. For example, he makes great play with the record of the 'Indians' who reached the coast of Germany in the reign of Frederick Barbarossa, but will not believe the Siberian fisherman who told Jenkinson that he had been far towards Cathay on the North East Passage. Gilbert's purpose was to deny the North East and to assert the North West. The maps to which he makes reference, and others prepared later under his own inspiration, indicate the kind of North West Passage he had in mind. It opened from the Atlantic in 62° N., as Sebastian Cabot had asserted, and then trended to lower latitudes until it gave access to the Pacific between 40° and 50° N. By ruling a line on the modern map from Port Nelson in Hudson Bay to the middle of the state of Oregon we have an approximate rendering of Gilbert's conception of the unknown northern coast of America. Such a passage was more attractive than the rigours of the North East, for most of it lay in the latitudes (and, it was assumed, the climate) of the British Isles.

Among the pure scientists Dee was not idle during these years. He was respected by prominent navigators and became their oracle in matters of high theory hardly yet ripe for translation into practice. He invented the 'paradoxall compass', an instrument whose nature is not precisely known but which appears to have been

¹ Prof. E. G. R. Taylor, *Tudor Geography*, pp. 34-5.

an aid to laying off courses on a great circle. Stephen Borough, who sought instruction from Dce, was an advocate of theoretical training for pilots and urged the government in 1562 to establish an authority for examining and licensing on the lines of the Pilot-Major's office in Spain. Nothing came of it, and it was left to private men to carry on the instruction of navigators. In 1561 Richard Eden published a useful translation of the *Arte de Navegar* of Martin Cortes, a standard Spanish textbook. The finding of longitude was the most vital problem yet to be solved. Several theoretical methods had been proposed, but even those which were valid were impracticable at sea since they demanded a perfection of timepieces which was not attained until the eighteenth century.

The first war of religion in France, already alluded to, was symptomatic of much that was to come. English privateers obtained commissions to prey upon French Catholic shipping, and inevitably began to annoy neutrals on the excuse that they carried enemy goods. From that to naked piracy was a step that was often taken. The offence was committed chiefly against the Spanish and Flemish subjects of Philip II, who maintained no naval forces for the protection of his trade-route through the Channel. Thomas Cobham, the brother of a peer, was guilty of several such piracies and evinced religious animosity by murdering a friar who fell into his hands. The records of the Court of Admiralty reveal some impudently daring performances by Martin Frobisher in the same business. After his voyages to Guinea we discern him dimly as a merchants' factor in Morocco in the late fifteen-fifties. The French war gave him a chance nearer home. A Norfolk speculator fitted out a privateer and gave him the command.

Once possessed of a ship, Frobisher cast off his employer and engaged in piracy on his own account. He worked in alliance with the Cornish rovers who had long been using the havens of southern Ireland as entrepôts for stolen cargoes. One of Frobisher's captures brought him into serious trouble, for it consisted of some valuable goods consigned in a Flemish ship to King Philip himself. Frobisher was examined in the Admiralty Court, where he told a farcical story showing that he had found the Fleming in distress, had relieved his necessities, and had unwillingly had the goods forced upon him in gratitude. The Court's decision is not traceable, but at least we know that Frobisher remained unchanged. He is the only one among the great sea-captains of the age who has been proved guilty of plain piracy in home waters. Such ill-doing was not all on one side. It was balanced by the iniquitous conduct of the Inquisition in Spanish ports. There has been some tendency to discount the evil stories of the Inquisition as emanating from Protestant bias, but an examination of the records, both those of the English state papers and of courts of law, gives evidence that confiscation of Englishmen's goods was one of its motives, while the cruelties in which it indulged are clearly attested by voluminous accounts of the proceedings kept by the Inquisitors themselves.¹

English merchants also carried on a regular trade with the Canary Islands. There was nothing question-

¹ For the Inquisition in Spain see cases from the Court of Requests and the High Court of Admiralty cited in the present author's 'Piracy and Honest Trade', *Blackwood's Magazine*, April 1930. The records of the Inquisitors themselves are well exemplified in voluminous transcripts made by Mr. G. R. G. Conway from the Mexican National Archives and other sources. Mr. Conway kindly showed some of these to the author. They are yet unpublished.

able about this traffic; it was permitted by the Spanish government and had been established early in the century. At Teneriffe the English factor was Thomas Nicholas. In 1560 the Inquisition arrested him for heresy on the evidence, as he asserted, of thieves and prostitutes. He was kept in prison for nearly two years and all the goods in his charge were confiscated. Another case, of which we know more details, was that of John Frampton, merchant of Bristol. In 1561 he went on a trading voyage to Lisbon and Cadiz, leaving his ship at the latter place while he went overland to Malaga to buy wines. During his absence the Inquisitors searched the ship and found an innocuous pre-Reformation book printed in English. On the assumption that an English book must be heretical they arrested Frampton and took him to the headquarters of the Inquisition, the Castle of Triana at Seville. Being questioned on his beliefs he was found to be a heretic indeed, was three times racked, and released under an order never to quit Spain and to wear for life the San Benito, the costume of the convicts of the Inquisition. All this might be explained on the score of religious zeal, but in addition Frampton was relieved of his ship and cargo and two thousand ducats in cash, which was legalised piracy. Ten years afterwards he was still petitioning the English Court of Admiralty for redress.

The after-history of Nicholas and Frampton is similar. Both escaped from Spanish territory and both devoted themselves to the publication of books which should inform their countrymen of the tropical lands whose wealth was monopolised by Spain and Portugal. Nicholas translated Spanish works and brought them out under English titles: *Newes lately come from the great Kingdom of China*; *The pleasant history of the Con-*

quest of the West India, now called New Spain; The Discovery and Conquest of Peru. He wrote also from his own knowledge *A pleasant Description of the Fortunate Islands called the Islands of Canaria.* Frampton produced *Joyful Newes out of the Newfound World*, translated from a Spanish work on the natural products of America; *A Discourse of the Navigations which the Portugales do make; The most famous travels of Marcus Paulus*, the first English version of Marco Polo; and other books to the same purpose.

Between them they were responsible for much of the propaganda of Elizabethan imperialism. It was a more effective revenge than they could have taken by fitting out privateers and adding wrong to wrong at sea.

CHAPTER IV

JOHN HAWKINS AND HIS PROJECT

WHEN Elizabeth came to the throne a young sea-captain named John Hawkins was trading out of Plymouth. His father, William Hawkins, merchant and seaman, had been the chief magnate of Plymouth in the days of Henry VIII. He had owned merchantmen and privateers, had led expeditions to Africa and Brazil, and had served in Parliament and the town council. This William Hawkins died in 1554. His two sons, William and John, succeeded to the business. In the ensuing years William, the elder, managed the Plymouth headquarters, while John commanded ships and dealt with the foreign connections.

John Hawkins went frequently to the Canary Islands, where he made friends among the Spanish merchants and gathered information about the rich colonies in the West. He was good-looking, well-dressed and courteous, an ordinary type of prosperous man; but that was only the exterior. The qualities of his mind were above the ordinary. He had a remarkable capacity for acquiring and assessing information, political as well as mercantile. His thoughts compassed butts of wine and casks of sugar and also the policies of kings and the determinants of war and peace. His charm of manner was irresistible—an enemy said that it was the thing he feared most in John Hawkins. He was well educated and expressed himself as clearly in writing as in speech. To

the quick reaction of the seaman he added the patience and judgment of a profound thinker. And, that these talents might not rust, his ambition was great.

In the West Indies he saw possibilities whose nature cannot be made clear without some account of the condition of the islands of the Caribbean and the mainland coasts surrounding it. It is a common impression that Spain developed her colonial empire in peaceful seclusion until the Elizabethan English broke into the charmed circle and reduced it to a chaos of freebooting. That impression is erroneous and has gained currency only because the records of French maritime enterprise are not widely known in this country. For the French were attracted in force to the Indies a generation before the English became interested. The duel for European supremacy between Francis I and Charles V began in 1521, just as Cortes was completing the conquest of Mexico with its accumulated hoards of gold and silver. French privateers waylaid the homeward-bound Spanish ships, and in 1523 a squadron equipped by Jean Ango of Dieppe captured a rich consignment of Mexican treasure. Every French adventurer became keen to emulate the achievement, and the waters of the Azores formed a cruising ground for a multitude of commerce raiders. In the 1530's, if not earlier, the Frenchmen entered the Caribbean itself, preyed upon the local shipping, and sacked the seaports. The next development grew out of the rise of Protestantism in France. The new Calvinist doctrine made especial headway among the seamen of the northern and western coasts. They not only plundered the West Indies as their predecessors had done, but they took pleasure in murdering priests and desecrating churches. The Spaniards retaliated, and all the atrocities of a war of religion were in full progress

in the tropical seas during the last phase of the Hapsburg-Valois contest in Europe.

That contest, as is now known, ended with the Peace of Câteau-Cambrésis in 1559. At the time it was not realised to be the end. The treaty was one of a long series which had proved to be mere truces settling nothing. An accidental circumstance made it final, namely, the death of Henry II of France shortly after its signature, and the collapse of French power and prestige under his degenerate sons and successors; but it was nearly ten years before that result was certainly apparent. Thus in the 1560's the position in the Caribbean seemed unaltered. French captains, disregarding the peace, raided far and wide. The coasts of Hispaniola, Cuba and the Spanish Main were in a state of terror. The little seaport towns, scantily peopled and for the most part unfortified, kept anxious watch, and at the first appearance of sails at sea packed off their women and valuables to inland hiding-places. The despatches of their officials are full of lamentations on the enormities of the *corsarios* and *luteranos* (to the Spaniard every Protestant was a Lutheran), and for lack of naval defence the rich empire bade fair to bleed to death. Such was the state of the Indies when John Hawkins turned his attention to them.

The period of the Hapsburg-Valois contest had been also a period of Anglo-Spanish alliance. Spain, the Netherlands and Germany were the best customers of English cloth-exporters, and the statesmanship of the Henries took care of the interests of their merchants. On the other side the Hapsburgs had need of England, since her sea-power could close or keep open the vital Channel communication between Spain and the Low Countries. The alliance was therefore one of natural

interests and the more enduring on that account. With temporary breaks, as when Wolsey veered towards France in the decline of his career and when the Emperor arrested English trade in revenge for privateering in 1545, it held good for close on eighty years. Its penultimate phase was that of the Spanish marriage of Mary Tudor in 1554 and the joint reign of Philip and Mary in England. Its final phase filled the first ten years of Elizabeth, and it ended amid mutual recriminations in the winter of 1568-69. It is easy to misunderstand the Anglo-Spanish position in the first years of Elizabeth. She and Philip II were not friends, but they were allies, and the alliance was of such long standing that it was a tradition to their respective subjects. That, equally with the depredations of the French, is the background to the West Indian plans of Hawkins.

One consequence of the continued amity was that Englishmen were already active in the West, although in a different manner from that of the French. Seville was the chief port of English trade with Spain and contained a colony of resident Englishmen. These men were allowed by Charles V to go to the West Indies. An English merchant is recorded as being in Hispaniola in 1526. In the 'fifties there were a number of them in Mexico. Whether others went also to the Spanish Main or even penetrated to Peru is unknown. Philip II likewise permitted the Englishmen to reside in Mexico, where some of them had official employment. They had of course to behave as strict Catholics, to obtain licence to travel to the colonies, and to ship their goods only from and to Seville and in Spanish bottoms. Save for the legal formality they were to most intents and purposes naturalised Spaniards. Only to that extent was Spain prepared to be liberal to Englishmen. She

objected to their voyaging to the West under their own flag. An English vessel which appeared at Santo Domingo in 1527, in quest of trade, was fired on and fled, and the experiment was not repeated. Charles V was determined to keep his colonial trade a monopoly of his own flag and shipping, and Philip was confirmed in the same policy by a dread of the introduction of heresy into his mixed colonial population.

From his Spanish friends in the Canaries John Hawkins learned of the depredations of the French, the lack of any adequate defence, and the dissatisfaction of the colonists at the home government's neglect of their sufferings. He learned also that the supply of negro slaves to the planters was restricted by a system of monopoly which greatly enhanced their price. In addition it was common knowledge that English manufactures found a market in the West and that, as with all other goods, their cost to the colonist was greatly increased by shipment in the annual convoys which were slow and expensively run and subject to levies for insurance and escort. The convoy system had been inaugurated by Charles V for defence against the French and was made more stringent in the early years of Philip II. The method of the slave trade was of particular interest to Hawkins. There was at that time no general and permanent *asiento* as in the later period of the Spanish Empire. Instead the Crown granted licences for limited numbers of slaves to various individuals or syndicates, and these persons were often foreigners. Sometimes Portuguese merchants held the licences, and sometimes Genoese financiers. The Genoese not only advanced money to the Spanish government but also furnished fleets of galleys for its naval wars against the Turks in the Mediterranean.

The precedent was already established that foreigners might hold the slaving concessions; and it was a fact which must have appealed to the Plymouth merchant.

He himself had always behaved in orderly fashion towards Spaniards. For a few years he had been a loyal subject of Philip as King of England. He may have been personally known to him, since he had been a freeman of Plymouth when the King landed there in 1554 and was sumptuously entertained by the borough. In support of this we have a statement by a Spaniard who knew Hawkins that the latter was knighted by King Philip on his first arrival in England.¹ There is no corroboration of the honour discoverable in English documents, and the so-called knighthood cannot have been an English one since its recipient was invariably known as 'Mr.' Hawkins until 1588. But the tale is significant in view of Hawkins's oft-repeated claim to be in some special sense a servant of the King.

Weighing all these complicated circumstances John Hawkins determined to gain for himself a privileged position in the colonial trade. He was the subject of an allied sovereign, his fellow-subjects were already trading under restrictions in the West, he was of good personal repute, and non-Spaniards were already holding slaving concessions. These were the *pros* for his venture. Against it was a very serious *contra*, that he had as yet no licence from the Spanish Crown. It remained to be seen whether such a licence could be won for a direct trade under the English flag, a thing against all established policy and precedent. Hawkins evidently thought it possible, and, as will appear, he had something to offer which it might have been worth Philip's while to consider.

¹ I. A. Wright, *Spanish Documents concerning English Voyages to the Caribbean, 1527-1568* (Hakluyt Society, 1929), p. 79 note.

JOHN HAWKINS AND HIS PROJECT

Shortly after 1560 Hawkins moved to London and formed a syndicate consisting of merchants and officials. Among them were Sir Lionel Ducket and Sir Thomas Lodge, already engaged in the Gold Coast trade, and Benjamin Gonson and Sir William Winter, respectively Treasurer and Surveyor of the Navy. Hawkins had married Katherine, the daughter of Benjamin Gonson, in 1559. The syndicate subscribed the money for an enterprise of a new kind; in fact they hoped to become the first English *cessionnaires* for the West Indian slave trade.¹

With four ships Hawkins sailed from Plymouth in October 1562. He went first to the Canaries, where he touched at Teneriffe and consulted with his chief Spanish ally, the merchant Pedro de Ponte. It was in pursuance of a plan already concerted, and de Ponte had a Spanish pilot for the West Indies in readiness to join the English. Hawkins then departed for Cape Verde, while de Ponte sent information direct to Hispaniola that the expedition might be expected there with slaves for sale in the following year. Between Cape Verde and Sierra Leone Hawkins obtained his negroes. Accounts vary as to their number, but the probable figure is about 400. Some of the blacks he captured on shore himself, others he had from Portuguese ships and merchants. The Portuguese asserted that he took their slaves by sheer piracy, but the English version of his methods was that he always paid fair prices for all he had. The truth seems to be that some of the Portuguese were willing to sell to him, but that they required him to show force so that they might have an excuse to their

¹ For detailed references to sources of evidence for the Hawkins' voyages, see the author's *Sir John Hawkins* (Oxford, 1927). Miss Wright's volume of Spanish documents, *ut supra*, was published subsequently and furnishes many additional facts from the Spanish side.

own government for having acted illegally. A Portuguese envoy subsequently brought to England a detailed account of the piracies, with ships and cargoes specified, but it is noteworthy that although Hawkins's accusers complained of blows and insults they did not allege that he had killed a single person. Their story is therefore suspiciously thin. His own account, which he furnished long afterwards to Richard Hakluyt, condenses all into a phrase—he took his negroes 'partly by the sword and partly by other means'. As against the white men his sword was evidently employed in diplomatic fashion only. He obtained not only human cargo but ivory and vegetable products. With these he freighted one of his ships and sent her back to England. With the other three and a Portuguese vessel which he chartered¹ he followed the trade-wind route across the Atlantic.

So far Hawkins had been on ground familiar to his fellow-countrymen. He now approached the unknown. His destination was Hispaniola, where he must put his projects to the test. He knew that his coming was expected by influential persons who desired to trade with him. He knew also that the authorities were likely to express disapproval since his venture was not covered by their laws. Those laws were explicit: no foreigner might go to the Indies without licence, and no goods might be sold there unless they had been duly manifested at Seville.² He believed that the law would not be enforced; it would be all a matter of tact, wariness and personal diplomacy, in which he trusted his own

¹ The Portuguese complaint stated that he took this vessel by force. But it seems that he despatched her from Hispaniola to Europe unescorted, under her own crew, and with goods of his on board. If she was really a prize piratically captured it was an incredibly simple proceeding on the pirate's part.

² Miss Wright's *Spanish Documents*, p. 8.

ability. It was a situation to put a business man on his mettle.

In April 1563, Hawkins arrived at Puerto de Plata on the north coast of Hispaniola. The local authorities found it inconvenient to deal with him there and sent him on to La Isabela, twelve leagues distant. At that place he succeeded in opening a profitable trade. The council at Santo Domingo the capital, on the south side of the great island, sent a captain named Lorenzo Bernaldez with orders to raise a force and arrest all the English. It seems probable that they did not mean him to do anything that would prevent the receipt of the newcomer's wares. If Hawkins could be captured, no doubt that would have been satisfactory, for they would then get his goods for nothing. But Hawkins was not likely to walk into a trap, and Bernaldez had no intention of driving him and his trade away by forbidding the Spaniards to buy from him. So Bernaldez, alleging himself to be overmatched, concluded an agreement with Hawkins, permitting him to sell negroes and other merchandise on payment of the duty of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. There was another impost payable on negroes by the regular licensees of the trade, but Hawkins refused to pay this on the ground that the arrangement did not apply to him. Bernaldez covered himself by so wording his permission that he gave it 'so far as he was authorised to do so', which was not at all. Hawkins no doubt knew that the permit was legally worthless, but its possession was nevertheless useful as a debating point in Europe. Under its authority he disposed of his cargoes very amicably and profitably not only to the planters of Puerto de Plata and La Isabela but also to those of Monte Christi, another settlement on the same coast.

The transactions were not for cash but for goods.

Even the duties were paid in negroes at an agreed valuation. The goods which Hawkins obtained were pearls, hides and sugar, and also a small quantity of gold. In addition to his English ships he laded two others with hides and sugar, and despatched them for Seville, consigned to Hugh Tipton, a prominent English merchant of that city. One of these ships, the *Sancto Amarco*, did not reach Seville, but was carried by her crew into Lisbon, where the authorities seized the goods. It is very likely that this was the Portuguese vessel which Hawkins had brought from Guinea. The other ship was a Spanish caravel chartered by Hawkins in Hispaniola. She duly arrived at Seville and her cargo was likewise seized, apparently to the great surprise of Hawkins. To us, knowing the outcome of these ventures, the seizure appears obvious rather than surprising. Why was Hawkins so confident? The explanation may well be that he had an understanding with persons of influence in Spain as well as in the colonies. The Duke of Feria, prominent among Philip's councillors, had an English wife, and George Fitzwilliam, an officer in Hawkins's service, was a kinsman of hers. It is a possible clue, and there may have been other connections. He acted throughout as if he expected his trade to be recognised and indeed, as will be explained later, there were good reasons why Spanish statesmen, in their own country's interest, might have given a hearing to his proposals.

However, the goods at Seville were confiscated, and Tipton was arrested for receiving them. Bernaldez and the authorities at Santo Domingo had written their version of the affair to Spain and had represented their actions as unavoidable. But there was at Santo Domingo an official named Echegoyan who was either incorrupt-

ible or had not been adequately corrupted. He wrote to the King a vigorous denunciation of Bernaldez and the others, charging them with betrayal of their duty, and he drew attention to the cargoes sent to Seville. But for him the Seville consignment might have been silently allowed. It is noteworthy that there was no necessity for Hawkins to risk these goods by sending them to Spain rather than to England. A clandestine trader would not have done it. The incident testifies that he regarded himself as substantially a recognised trader.

With his own ships Hawkins sailed for England and arrived in August or early September 1563. In spite of the loss of two relatively unimportant cargoes, the voyage had been a financial success, and the adventurers were encouraged to repeat the undertaking in the following year.

As soon as he reached England Hawkins learned of the seizures at Lisbon and Seville. Against the Portuguese he later took proceedings in the Admiralty Court, but never obtained any redress. The Spanish business was the more important, and he attended to it without delay. He appealed to the Queen, who wrote a letter to Philip II urging his case. She also provided another to Sir Thomas Challoner, the English ambassador at Madrid. Before the end of the year Hawkins was ready to go to Spain in person. His purpose was undoubtedly to negotiate for recognition, since the lost cargo was hardly of sufficient value to warrant so much activity. Of what followed there is a doubt. There is evidence that Hawkins went to Spain and there is evidence that he did not go. On the whole it seems probable that he did not. In any case there was no success in recovering the confiscated goods.

The general situation was indeed unfavourable.

Hawkins had behaved circumspectly in the Indies and had done his best to make a good impression on Spaniards everywhere. His fellow-countrymen had been acting otherwise. In 1562-63, as has been noticed, there occurred the first religious war in France. The English government sided with the Huguenots, declared war on Charles IX, and sent an expedition to occupy Le Havre. The Huguenots made a poor showing and concluded a separate peace, leaving their allies in the lurch. The English at Le Havre had to capitulate, and their Queen and her minister had undoubtedly burnt their fingers. On the sea there was much privateering against French commerce, and before long it extended to the capture of Spanish ships on the charge of carrying French goods. Not only that, but sheer piracy broke out, and Martin Frobisher and others robbed Spaniards without any legal excuse. Anti-English feeling naturally ran high in Spain and perhaps was the deciding reason why Hawkins's affair failed to prosper.

Yet it is evident that he regarded the rebuff as only temporary. And not only he but the Queen also believed that ~~that~~ ^{his} plans were sound. For, in the summer of 1564, ~~possibl~~ ^{she} was preparing a new expedition, she took him formally into her service and contributed a vessel from the Navy to his force. Thenceforward he was an officer of the Queen, and his fleet had the status of the Queen's ships. The etiquette of flags, then as now, was very significant, and Hawkins advertised his new position by sailing under the royal standard as well as the cross of St. George. It was a thing he would not have done if he had not been entitled to do so. It was not for the profits of a trading voyage that the Queen thus pledged her credit. She could have speculated, as she had done in the Gold Coast ventures, without making her majesty

so apparent. What she and John Hawkins had in mind may be stated here, although direct evidence for it occurs only at a later stage. It was that the Englishman's leadership and armed ships could do service to Philip in the Indies by assisting him to cope with the plague of privateers whose depredations filled the despatches of his colonial governors. Hitherto Spain had found no remedy, for her administrative methods killed initiative; her officers could not act; all they did was to write home and implore the government to act. The individualists of Plymouth and the English coast might be trusted to perform better. A generation of sporadic warfare had taught them how to patrol the Channel, and there can be no doubt that they would have been efficient in patrolling the Caribbean. This would be a *quid pro quo* in Hawkins's bid for the slaving concession, and the greater the profits from the latter, the more effective would be his armament in the Indies. On national considerations the advantage would lie in the knitting of the Anglo-Spanish alliance. Although religious difference was threatening to weaken it, both countries still had need of it. Philip's permanent necessity was the keeping open of the Channel thoroughfare: failure to keep it open was to lose him the Netherlands in years to come. Elizabeth had also need of Spain's friendship. She had just been at war with France, and might be again, for Mary Stuart ruled in Scotland and claimed the English throne; and Mary was more than half French in blood and policy. This was what Elizabeth played for in backing Hawkins, a statesmanlike system of European security. The decision lay with Philip. Whether he ever leaned towards agreement we do not know, although it is probable that some Spaniards did. But the black cloud of sectarian

hatred was mounting, and the destiny of the sixteenth century was to be the wars of religion and not the peace of common sense. Within three or four years there was to be no more doubt, and the ancient alliance was to be ended for ever.

Before Hawkins sailed again for the Indies a French undertaking gave point to his offers of service to Philip. In 1562 a Huguenot captain named Jean Ribault had led an expedition to Florida, and on the Atlantic coast of that country he had planted a small colony and had himself returned to France to organise reinforcements. Ribault found the civil war in progress and betook himself to England where the Queen was inclined to take the Florida project under her own patronage in order to keep it out of the hands of the hostile French government. Elizabeth commissioned Thomas Stukely to raise an English force to go to Florida with Ribault, but Stukely found Channel privateering a more profitable employment. He also betrayed the Florida plans to the Spanish ambassador and delayed the preparations so that Spain might have opportunity to attack the existing colony. That, however, proved unnecessary, for the French colonists abandoned the undertaking and sailed for Europe in 1563. The result of Stukely's playing false was that the matter ceased to be an Anglo-Huguenot venture and became purely French. The civil war having ended, another Huguenot leader, René de Laudonnière, sailed with the approval of the French government in 1564 and re-established the colony, while Ribault returned to France to play his part in the project.

In the eyes of contemporaries the Florida colony was no trivial affair. The French pioneers claimed to have found the natives in possession of gold and silver, and

the country was reputed to be immensely rich. If it should turn out to be a second Mexico this wealth would now strengthen the victorious Guise party in France and render more formidable the claim of Mary Stuart to the English throne. The possibility was sufficiently serious to alarm Elizabeth and Cecil. To Philip II a French Florida offered an even more immediate peril, for his treasure fleets debouched from the Caribbean by the Florida Channel, and a nest of privateers on their flanks might take heavy toll of the profits of the Indies. It was one more illustration of the fact that so long as the Valois monarchy was, or appeared to be, effective, England and Spain had many common interests. Accordingly Hawkins, by order of the Queen, included in the programme of his second voyage a visit to Florida, in order that he might ascertain the truth about its prospects and perhaps do a useful piece of work for both the sovereigns whom he aspired to serve.

The second expedition was on a larger scale than the first, and its list of subscribers is much more impressive. In addition to the Navy officials Winter and Gonson, and the London merchants Edward Castlyn, Sir William Garrard and Sir William Chester, it comprises the names of Sir William Cecil,¹ the Lord Admiral (Clinton), the Earl of Pembroke, and Lord Robert Dudley, whom the Queen created Earl of Leicester in 1564. In addition the Queen contributed the *Jesus of Lubeck*, 700 tons, at a valuation of £2000, and the Navy Office received profits calculated on that amount of capital. Before sailing, Hawkins had an audience of the Queen at Enfield,

¹ The list is in Lansdowne MSS. 6, ff. 48-9. Cecil afterwards told the Spanish ambassador that he had declined to take a share. But the earlier part of the Lansdowne collection consists of papers which were originally Cecil's own private copies of State documents, and if he had not in fact been a shareholder one would expect to find his name deleted from the list.

where he received her final instructions like any other ambassador or commander in the field. These circumstances place the undertaking in a different category from the Guinea voyages to which the Navy had also lent ships of war. Hawkins was an officer of the Crown, and the Crown and its Councillors were the chief promoters of the expedition. Hawkins was not exaggerating when he declared to Spanish officials, that he had sailed 'by order of Elizabeth, Queen of England, whose fleet this is', and again that 'this fleet belongs to the Queen, my mistress'.¹

Hawkins sailed from Plymouth on 18 October 1564, called at Ferrol, and reached the Canaries early in November. At Teneriffe he again met Pedro de Ponte and made arrangements for trade in the Indies. Then he went to the African coast and obtained his negroes between Cape Verde and Sierra Leone. The English account, written by John Sparke, one of the gentlemen adventurers, describes a good deal of fighting with the negroes and friendly co-operation with the Portuguese slavers. The Portuguese complaint subsequently presented in London alleges the piratical capture of some sixteen Portuguese ships, with slaves, gold and ivory, and specified acts of violence which, as before, did not include the killing of a single person.² Some of the ships which, willingly or not, transferred slaves to Hawkins, belonged to the holders of the recognised monopoly, and a witness testified that 'he himself heard the English call out to him in a loud voice that the contract (*tractatio*) belonged neither to the King of Portugal nor to the contractors, but to the realm of England and

¹ Wright, *op. cit.* pp. 82-3.

² After Hawkins's return Guzman de Silva, Philip's ambassador in England, reported that the expedition had traded with the Portuguese slavers, not that it had robbed them.

JOHN HAWKINS AND HIS PROJECT

John Hawkins'. It was a categorical statement of what was already implicit in the Queen's association with the voyage. What we do not know is the hidden story of Hawkins's connections in Spain which gave ground for so much confidence.

Early in 1565 the expedition had completed its cargoes and set sail for the West. The destination this time was not Hispaniola but the Spanish Main, the north coast of South America stretching from the delta of the Orinoco to the Isthmus of Panama. Hawkins had at least one introduction there, to Alonso Bernaldez, governor at Borburata and nephew of Lorenzo Bernaldez with whom business had been done in Hispaniola on the first voyage. Before reaching the Main he watered at Dominica, inhabited only by Caribs, and obtained fresh meat at Margarita where there was a small Spanish settlement. He found here and elsewhere along the Main that orders had been sent from Spain forbidding the colonists to trade with him; he found also that the officials did not take these orders very seriously.

At Borburata, the first important place to be visited, Hawkins requested licence to sell his wares. The Spaniards were willing, but as a matter of form pleaded the King's prohibition and asked for a delay while they communicated with Bernaldez, then absent at another place. Meanwhile they allowed the Englishman to sell some negroes on the plea that they were sickly and likely to die on his hands. Bernaldez hastened to Borburata, and Hawkins formally petitioned him for leave to trade on the ground that the fleet was the Queen's, that there was amity between her and the King, and that Hawkins himself was a past servitor of King Philip and might still do him great service. The governor

required something more than this, and Hawkins added a threat, most politely worded, that if leave were not granted he would take it by force. He could not quit the port, he said, without obtaining supplies, and even if he wished to his crews would not permit it. Bernaldez then granted licence to trade and wrote to Spain justifying his action as being the best he could have done for His Majesty's service.

There was a further hitch, also adjusted by a threat of force, on the duties payable, and Hawkins, having sold negroes and merchandise, passed on to Curaçoa, Cabo de la Vela and Rio de la Hacha. At the latter place we have details of his dealings with the ruling official, the Treasurer Miguel de Castellanos. They took very much the same course, with perhaps rather more show of resistance than at Borburata. But the Spaniards' intention was the same, to buy the coveted goods, and the resistance, as one of Philip's own servants remarked, was a sham.

Rio de la Hacha was the last place visited on the Main. On leaving it Hawkins steered for Hispaniola. He had no pilot for the Caribbean and no previous personal knowledge of its navigation. He thus failed to make adequate allowance for the current that sets westward in the track of the trade wind and was carried to leeward of his goal. He sighted Jamaica but could not find a port in that sparsely inhabited island. The south coast of Cuba seemed equally deserted and was dangerous by reason of shoals and islets. He therefore passed out into the Atlantic by the Florida Channel and looked for Havana on the north side of Cuba. As a rendezvous for the homeward bound plate fleets it was an important place, and might have offered good business. But its landlocked harbour surrounded by high ground was

difficult for strangers to find, whose only guide was one of the inaccurate charts of the period; and Hawkins, pressed for time, did not persist. He concluded that in default of exact knowledge of the position he must have passed it unawares. He then turned away for Florida.

On its Atlantic coast in $30\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N. he found Laudonnière and the French colony established on the River of May. It was speedily apparent that the wealth and prospects of the region had been overrated. Laudonnière and his men were short of food, at war with the Indians, and thoroughly disillusioned. Of the reputed gold and silver deposits they had found no trace. The only use of the colony would be as a base for attacking the treasure fleets, and at the time Laudonnière had no chance of doing so because he lacked shipping and was anxiously looking for reinforcements from home. Hawkins could easily judge that Florida would send no treasure to France for use against the English throne. But it would be a service to King Philip if the French could be removed. Hawkins accordingly offered the colonists a free passage home in his fleet. The men were eager but Laudonnière refused, his duty being to hold on to the last. Hawkins very generously let him have some victuals and a fifty-ton ship on credit and passed on up the coast to the Newfoundland fishery where he obtained salt cod and thence sailed for England.

He reached a Cornish port in September 1565, after a fortunate and lucrative voyage. De Silva, the Spanish ambassador, reported that the profit was 60 per cent on the outlay. He gleaned a good many details for Philip's information, but made no mention of the fact that the Queen and her leading ministers were the investors in the business. Hawkins in the Indies had not concealed

the Queen's participation, and the apparent ignorance of de Silva is noteworthy.

Soon after the return of the successful commander the College of Arms granted him coat armour with the famous crest of a demi-Moor proper bound with a cord. The grant was made on the recommendation of Sir William Cecil and the Earl of Leicester.

CHAPTER V

THE THIRD VOYAGE OF JOHN HAWKINS¹

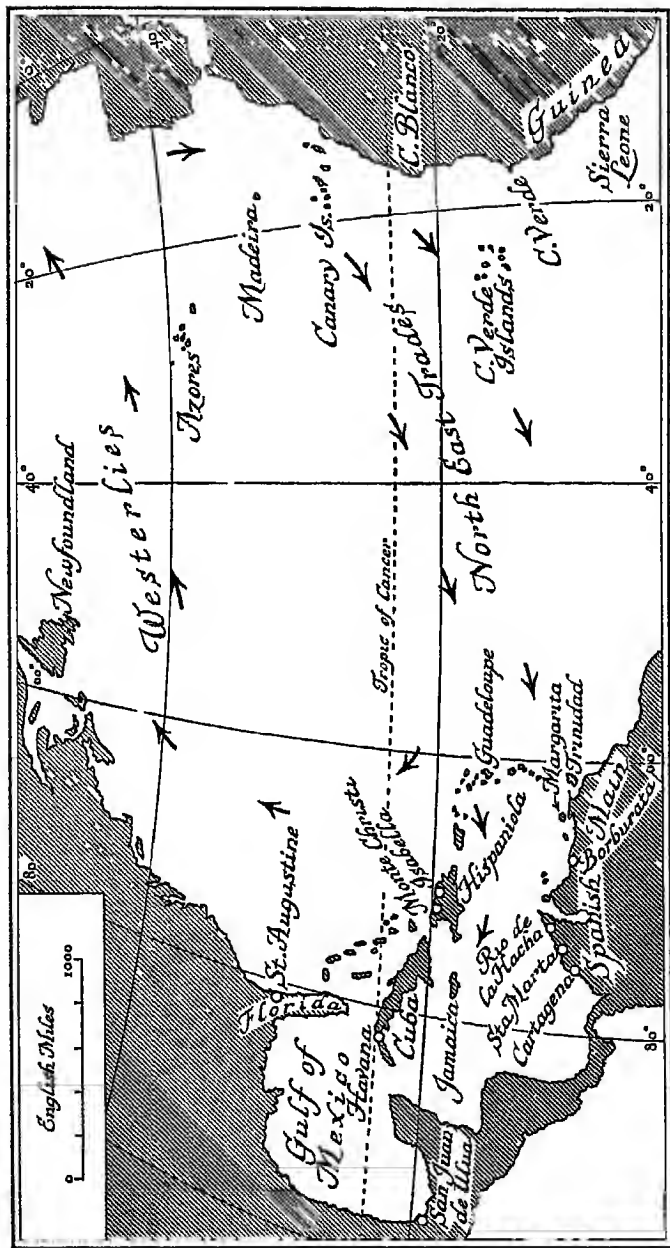
IF ever there had been in Spanish political circles a disposition to admit the English to a recognised status in the Indies, it is clear that a contrary decision ultimately prevailed. It seems likely that the decision was taken not later than 1565 while Hawkins was homeward bound from his second voyage. The Indies and their trade needed defence, and in default of it might be lost to Spain. The peril seemed to be increasing, its latest phase being the establishment of Laudonnière in Florida, which may be compared in significance with the first wintering of the plundering Danes in Saxon England. There were two alternative remedies, that Spain should admit the English as mercenaries in the Caribbean in the same way as she employed Genoese mercenaries in the Mediterranean, or that she herself should actively defend the Indies. In 1565 the urging of a great Spanish captain, Pero Menéndez de Avilés, decided Philip on the latter course. He commissioned Menéndez to lead an expedition for the extermination of the French in Florida. In the late summer Menéndez reached the scene of action, a week after Jean Ribault had also arrived there with the reinforcements. Laudonnière had been awaiting when Hawkins interviewed him. In a series of actions Menéndez destroyed the

¹ As in the previous chapter, the references to original authorities will be found in *Sir John Hawkins* and Miss I. A. Wright's volume.

French. Laudonnière and a few others took ship and escaped. Ribault and the great majority surrendered at discretion and were massacred almost to a man. It was the first considerable Spanish victory over the European intruders, and it boded ill for the prospects of John Hawkins.

Other facts pointed in the same direction. The ordinances for the conduct of the two annual convoys between Spain and the Indies—the *Flota* and the *Galeones*—were revised and made more stringent, and in 1565 it was provided that the flagship of either fleet should be a 36-gun fighting galleon carrying no merchandise to hamper the use of her artillery.¹ Two years later Philip appointed Menéndez captain-general of a squadron of twelve armed ships, commonly known as the galleons of the Indian Guard, the expenses being defrayed by a levy on the merchandise which they protected. During Hawkins's first two voyages the colonial officials had trifled with the old-established laws and the King's recent instructions, and had made only a pretence of prohibiting the Englishman's trade. They had reason to think that they could act thus with impunity. After 1565 they were undeceived. Alonso Bernaldez, the governor of Borburata, was placed under arrest and sent home to answer for his conduct, while Castellanos at Rio de la Hacha was so impressed by the example that he made a determined instead of a sham effort to resist on the later occasions when the English visited his port. Nevertheless Hawkins persisted. News of these measures must have reached him slowly or not at all. The Florida massacre was the only event of which public news circulated in Europe and he could not be certain that it marked a hardening of Spanish policy towards himself.

¹ R. B. Merriman, *Rise of the Spanish Empire*, iv, 209-11.



THE VOYAGES OF JOHN HAWKINS, 1562-69

THE THIRD VOYAGE OF JOHN HAWKINS

At Rio de la Hacha he had obtained an order for a further consignment of negroes, and in 1566 he prepared a new expedition to supply them.

In the winter of 1565-66 he became acquainted with Guzman de Silva, the Spanish ambassador, and the two men had a number of friendly discussions. Hawkins wished above all things to open a new approach to the Spanish government, and de Silva wished to gain information about those of his own compatriots who had been abetting the slaving. Out of their talk arose a proposition that Hawkins should serve Spain with armed ships in the Mediterranean. De Silva seems to have broached the idea, and Hawkins jumped at it. If Philip accepted him he had no doubt of demonstrating his value, while a deputy might carry out that year's western expedition. If Philip did not accept, the negotiation would form excellent cover for fitting out a squadron without giving any cause for de Silva to protest. Ultimately that was what did occur. Philip let the summer pass without giving an answer, while Hawkins equipped four ships. De Silva had some misgivings, but as late as August wrote to his master that suspicions were unjustified. In October, however, he learned details that showed a slaving voyage to be intended. He at once complained to the Queen. She and Cecil protracted the argument, but at length had to admit Philip's right to forbid access to his colonies. Hawkins was summoned before the Judge of the Admiralty and compelled to give a bond for £500 that he would not go in person or send his ships to the Spanish Indies. The transaction was highly Elizabethan—in effect the Queen was exacting surety from herself that she would not disobey her own orders. The courtly de Silva expressed his thanks, and we are left wondering to what extent he was deluded.

The expedition was less markedly official in colour than the previous one. The Queen's officer did not go, neither did any of the Queen's ships. Nevertheless it must have had the approval of the government, or there would have been no expedition at all. On 9 November 1566, the ships cleared from Plymouth, three for the round voyage to Guinea and the Indies, and one intended to return direct from Guinea with the ivory, pepper and other produce that might be obtained there. The commander was Captain John Lovell. He appears on the page of history on this occasion only, but he had with him a young man who was to go far. His name was Francis Drake.

Drake was born at Tavistock in Devon at some date between 1541 and 1545, the former year being on the whole more probable. His father, Edmund Drake, was a tenant-farmer who became a Protestant when there were few of that religion in the west country. When the peasantry of Devon rose against Cranmer's new prayer-book in 1549 the elder Drake fled with his family and returned no more to his native county. He migrated to Kent and served as a chaplain to the naval dockyard at Chatham and Gillingham, living poorly enough in the hull of an old ship. With such early memories young Francis Drake grew up an ardent Protestant. His father taught him to read and write, but his education went little further. His temperament had no reflective side; he was wholly a man of action. His religion was strong in him. As a young man he used to labour to convert his shipmates—so, at least, one of them testified in the Inquisition.¹ As his career developed, other characteristics appeared: a lightning opportunism, rising at times to

¹ The *proceso* of Morgan Tillert in the Inquisition of Mexico, transcribed by Mr. G. R. G. Conway.

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inspiration, and an egoism which ensured that, whoever went under, Drake flourished; cheerfulness in misfortune and real kindly charity in success; unshakable determination and a talent for leading and lifting men that has seldom been surpassed. As a youth he learned his seamanship in the coasting trade with an aged skipper who died and bequeathed him a decrepit little ship. But Drake was a man who sought opportunity. He was a distant relation of John Hawkins, which probably accounts for his presence in Lovell's expedition to the Spanish Main.

Lovell sailed for Guinea, and we have, as on previous occasions, a detailed Portuguese complaint of his proceedings. In the same manner as Hawkins he is stated to have captured various ships with ladings of wax, ivory and negroes. A new feature in the account is that Lovell killed certain Portuguese in the course of his piracies, a charge that had not been made against Hawkins, from which we may infer that Lovell lacked either the good luck or the diplomatic skill of his employer. Then, sending home one of his four ships, he crossed the Atlantic with the other three. He visited Margarita, Borburata, Curaçoa and finally Rio de la Hacha. It is only the proceedings at the latter place that have remained on record. Although Lovell brought negroes which had been ordered from Hawkins two years previously, he came at an unpropitious hour. A new governor of Venezuela, Pedro Ponce de Leon, was making strict enquiry into past irregularities, and Miguel de Castellanos, Treasurer of Rio de la Hacha, was at that moment devising his answers to a searching paper of questions. Castellanos had therefore to get out of a scrape by vindicating himself at the expense of Lovell. He refused licence to trade and showed a bold

front to a threat of armed landing. After a week's haggling Lovell set on shore ninety negroes and departed without payment. Why he landed them is not clear. The Spaniards declared that they were old and sickly and dying on his hands, but no doubt the testimony was biassed; for the negroes were seized for the Crown and sold to the people of Rio de la Hacha, who had every incentive to decry their value. That Lovell was outwitted is clear from a subsequent statement of John Hawkins setting down the misfortune to 'the simpleness of my deputies who knew not how to handle these matters'.

So Lovell sailed away, not to be employed again by Hawkins, and young Drake had had his first experience of dealing with Spaniards. The leading citizens of Rio de la Hacha reported a glorious victory to the King, sparing neither the Treasurer's blushes nor their own: 'As for the humble residents of this city and the spiritual and material hardship they endured in the defence of the town, suffering hunger, cold, heat and exposure, each in turn taking his chance in notorious danger of death . . . we petition your majesty to deign to give us the proceeds from the said slaves which the Englishman left here. . . . And the glory and the palm for having defended the land and compelled so many valorous enemies to retire should be attributed to our general, because he furnished us arms and assembled us in a squadron, gave us courage to attack and even to come off victorious in an undertaking which seemed impossible to the town's small strength. He himself was in the vanguard of every danger and the last to enter into the fruits of victory. . . . Certain it is that his deeds merit favour and he is worthy of any your majesty may deign to extend to him; wherefore we entreat your

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majesty to remember his services, for virtue rewarded augments and increases.¹ The casualties in this desperate service had been *nil*.

Hitherto the expeditions had been made at intervals of two years, but Hawkins prepared another in 1567 without waiting for the return of Lovell, who seems not to have reached England until early in September. The new Atlantic expedition, the third to be led by John Hawkins in person, was on a more ambitious scale than any of its predecessors, and in its preparation there was a mysterious feature that does not admit of clear explanation. Until almost the moment of sailing the voyage was declared by all concerned to be for a purpose quite different from slaving and for a destination remote from the Spanish Indies. Two renegade Portuguese, one a merchant, the other a navigator, and both with African experience, had come to England declaring that in a part of Africa unoccupied by white men they knew of an immensely rich gold mine, and that for a suitable share in the profits they would guide an expedition to it. The two men had previously offered their information to Philip II, who had been sceptical, and they had next tried a French adventuring nobleman, Peyrot de Monluc. He had fitted out an expedition in 1566 which reached no farther than Madeira, where Monluc was killed in action with the Portuguese. Then, at the end of the year, the two projectors had come to England. They approached Sir William Winter, who introduced the project to the Queen. She was unwilling to act directly, but seems to have thought the thing feasible, for she turned it over to the Hawkins syndicate, of which she was herself a patron and member.

¹ Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-5.

For this ostensible purpose Hawkins fitted out a powerful squadron in the summer of 1567. It comprised the Queen's ships *Jesus of Lubeck* and *Minion* and four vessels belonging to John and William Hawkins. The Queen was fully cognisant of the preparations, of which the details were under the supervision of Sir William Cecil and the Lord Admiral. It was throughout a State undertaking, and the commander received his final instructions from the Queen before sailing. De Silva kept watch on the affair, protested against a suspected new intrusion on his master's colonies, and was assured both by the Queen and by Cecil (with a great oath) that the destination was limited to the African coast, and that there would be positively no extension to the West. Then in September, after Lovell and Drake had come home with their report, the 'pretence'—that is, the intention—collapsed. The two Portuguese absconded to France, and the treasure-hunt was bereft of its guides. Cecil and the Admiral blamed Hawkins for not keeping guard on them, and Hawkins blamed someone else; and the upshot was that with the Queen's and her ministers' consent he set forth once more on the usual slaving expedition.

What was the truth? It seems from the correspondence between the parties that there was a belief in the treasure story and that it was genuinely intended to follow it up. Nevertheless the fact that Hawkins was prepared to change the plan immediately on the flight of the guides shows premeditation; for food for the slaves had to be provided, and also the Spanish Main demanded manufactures as well as negroes, and the goods would be of a different sort from those used in the African trade. Hawkins in fact had these goods on board and was in all respects ready for a slaving voyage.

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Although there was now no chance of consent from the Spanish government, Hawkins behaved as though there had been, and we find him in the course of the voyage continually protesting his fidelity to Philip and his desire to do him a service. The Queen's motive can only be guessed at. The Spanish answer had been given, that there would be no licence for Englishmen in the West. It can hardly have been for a share of the trading profits that she was prepared to risk difficulties. Possibly she thought that if Hawkins showed once more that he could trade successfully in spite of Philip's displeasure it would constitute a bargaining counter in the diplomatic game. As for the African part of the expedition, it may have been held possible to combine the treasure-hunt with slaving—to gather the gold if it were found, and if not, to collect the negroes in hitherto unexploited country. But these are suppositions. The more we learn of this voyage the more difficulties it presents.

A mysterious incident occurred before the start. The ships were lying at Plymouth in the Catwater when a Flemish squadron under Philip's admiral, the Baron de Wachen, entered the port displaying Spanish flags. The established custom was for newcomers to salute the flag of the owners of the port by dipping their own flags and 'vailing' topsails. De Wachen did neither, although the *Jesus* and the *Minion* were obviously ships of war under the Queen's colours. Moreover, with a variety of anchorages to choose from, he made for the Catwater where he would be very close to the English ships. Hawkins did not like the look of it, and immediately opened fire on the offending flag. After half a dozen shots de Wachen made the proper salute and turned away to another part of the haven. He complained angrily of his ill-usage, but Hawkins rejoined that he

had only himself to blame. To the government Hawkins stated that the Fleming had meant to attack if he had found the English ships unready. It was very possibly true. Cecil and the Queen reproved their commander for making an unpleasant diplomatic incident, to which he answered: 'I had rather Her Highness found fault with me for keeping her ships and people to her honour than to lose them to the glory of others'.

Hawkins sailed on 2 October with his six ships and 408 men. Drake was on board the *Jesus* with his commander and not, as has been usually assumed, captain of the *Judith*.¹ That was a position he attained later in the voyage. From the outset the expedition was 'troublesome'. The great but ancient *Jesus of Lubeck* gave a great deal of trouble. She was thoroughly rotten, having in fact been condemned as not worth repair at the opening of the Queen's reign. On the fourth day out she ran into a gale, developed dangerous leaks, and was only kept afloat by extraordinary efforts; and, as will be shown, a similar crisis some months later had tragic effects on the fortunes of the voyage. Hawkins of course knew very well that she was likely to drown him, for he had sailed in her before, but it was one of the risks he had to take. A Queen's ship with a majestic appearance was an essential part of his equipment, and the Queen would not have spared him a good one. The *Minion* also had years before been described as 'spent and rotten', but she came creditably through all the hard service to which Hawkins now led her.

At a roadstead in the Canary Islands, previously fixed as a rendezvous, Hawkins collected his ships which had parted company in the gale. Thence he made for the African coast and sought for negroes in various havens

¹ *Proceso* of Morgan Tillert, *ut supra*.

and estuaries from Cape Verde to Sierra Leone. During this part of the voyage he fell in with a Frenchman, Captain Bland, in a captured Portuguese caravel. He seems to have compelled Bland to join the expedition and to have deprived him of his ship, of which Drake was placed in command. But afterwards Bland freely threw in his lot with Hawkins and was reinstated in the caravel, Drake being transferred to the command of the *Judith*. Another French vessel voluntarily joined Hawkins but left him after arriving in the Caribbean.

On the Guinea coast a state of undisguised warfare now existed between the English and French on one side and the Portuguese on the other. Since 1564-65, when Hawkins had last been there, many violent things had been done. An English ship had been sunk in action and another captured. Lovell had fought the Portuguese in 1566, and George Fenner had been foiled in an attempt to trade early in 1567, afterwards fighting a celebrated action at the Azores with an armed squadron sent by Portugal to vindicate her monopoly. Hawkins therefore made little show of keeping up the pretence of friendly trade and had much skirmishing with Portuguese ships in the rivers, and with negroes led by Portuguese on land. The result of it all was that he reached Sierra Leone with a very poor haul of slaves. At that place, however, a native king asked him to assist in war against another potentate, the Englishman to have all the prospective prisoners. Hawkins agreed and took part in the storming of a large fortified town containing several thousand defenders. His allies massacred most of these unfortunates and so deprived Hawkins of his full reward, but sufficient were saved to fill the holds of the squadron and make it worth while to cross the Atlantic to the Spanish colonies.

Hawkins himself to Sierra Leone at the beginning of February, the 15, and sighted Dominica in the Lesser Antilles 6 Eng' March. That island was inhabited only by Caribb and the English leader pushed on to make his first contact with the Spaniards at Margarita, an island lying off the coast of Venezuela. It was a small settlement at which fresh meat could be obtained. Hawkins's visit was uneventful and is important only because we have on record the letter in which he introduced himself to the governor:

WORSHIPFUL,

I have touched in your island only to the intent to refresh my men with fresh victuals, which for my money or wares you shall sell me, meaning to stay only but 5 or 6 days here at the furthest. In the which time you may assure yourself, and so all others, that by me or any of mine there shall no damage be done to any man; the which also the Queen's Majesty of England, my mistress, at my departure out of England commanded me to have great care of, and to serve with my navy the King's Majesty of Spain, my old master, if in places where I came any of his stood in need.

The letter is quoted in full because it is similar in terms to others addressed by Hawkins to Spanish officials in the course of this voyage and, one can hardly doubt, in the course of the previous voyages, although not one of the earlier missives has been preserved. The outstanding points to be noted are first, that the expedition is an enterprise under the sanction and direction of the English government, and second, that its leader is commanded to do service with his ships to the King of Spain if need shall arise. The sort of need that

might arise was obvious to every Spanish colonist; those at Margarita had been observed hurriedly retreating inland as Hawkins's sails approached, being under the impression that the newcomers were French pirates.

The next port of call was Borburata on the mainland of Venezuela, the nucleus of a colony capable of making considerable purchases. Hawkins sent in a letter to the governor, Pedro Ponce de Leon, who was absent in the interior, and another to the Bishop of Valencia asking him to persuade the governor to grant licence to trade. The bishop replied graciously, and Hawkins sent a party under Robert Barrett, the master of the *Jesus*, to visit him at his town. When Barrett arrived he found that the bishop had decided not to commit himself and had fled with all the inhabitants, although they had left a stock of victuals for the Englishmen's refreshment. After this the answer arrived from Ponce de Leon. It was a polite refusal to allow trade, the governor citing the King's strict commands and the example made of his predecessor Bernaldez after Hawkins's previous visit. The tone of the letter is remarkable. It is not that of a king's officer warning off a piratical intruder, but rather that proper to one addressing his equal in rank in the service of a friendly nation. It begins: 'Right worshipful, your arrival here, seeing I cannot show you any pleasure, is unto me a great grief, considering your merits. . . .' In fact the prohibition it conveyed was not enforced. Hawkins remained nearly two months at Borburata, in amicable intercourse with the Spaniards and daily selling them his wares. The governor apparently kept out of the way, but the bishop gave Hawkins his countenance and furnished him with letters of commendation to other officials along the Main.

Before leaving Borburata, Hawkins had already sent forward his small ships in advance to Coro, Curaçoa and Rio de la Hacha. At the latter place we first find Drake as an independent commander, with the 50-ton *Judith* and the still smaller *Angel*. It was here that Miguel de Castellanos ruled as the King's Treasurer and had got the better of Drake and Lovell in the previous year. Drake therefore arrived with a score to settle and it is unlikely that he sent in any courteous request for trade in the Hawkins manner. Hawkins must have known that there would be a tussle with Castellanos and selected Drake as the man most suitable to open the proceedings with spirit. Drake accordingly did so, with two round-shot through the Treasurer's house, and then having tested the defences and found them too strong for his little force, he anchored out of range, and kept watch on Rio de la Hacha pending his superior's arrival. The purpose of his mission was evidently to reconnoitre the fortifications and troops which Castellanos had been preparing, and of which Hawkins would have learned from his friends at Borburata. But Drake was not content merely to watch, and when a caravel appeared with despatches from Santo Domingo he gave chase and captured her close inshore under the musket fire of the land troops. It is quite possible that Drake acted in excess of his instructions, as he did in after times on greater occasions than this. Hawkins was determined to exact redress from Castellanos for the wrong inflicted on Lovell, but an indiscriminate aggression was out of keeping with his general policy.

After five days the main fleet arrived. Drake's report showed that Castellanos was prepared to fight. John Hawkins's handling of the situation is a rich example of practical psychology. He was bent on overcoming these

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people, but he did not wish to hit them any harder than was necessary; and he desired above all to part with them on friendly terms. He attempted no ingenious tactics of feint and surprise as his brilliant subordinate would have done, but played for moral ascendancy over the Treasurer in person, knowing that the weakest point in the defence was that the rank and file of the Spaniards would much rather trade than fight. He announced his intentions to the Treasurer in a pleasant letter wherein he touched easily on past transactions, demanded present trade, and concluded, 'If you see in the morning armed men aland let it nothing trouble you, for as you shall command they shall return aboard again. Showing me this pleasure, you shall command anything I have.' Castellanos could not compass the ironical style and replied with a vehement defiance, which he sought manfully to make good when Hawkins duly landed on the morrow.

With a party of between two and three hundred men Hawkins disembarked at a point about two miles from the port. Castellanos placed ninety Spanish musketeers in a fieldwork barring the way to the town, and himself rode at the head of twenty horsemen in the open. He had also a number of armed negroes and Indian archers in attendance. With half-hearted followers Castellanos was showing pluck that was unavailing. The English charged the entrenchment after its defenders had fired a premature volley at too long a range, drove out the Spaniards and chased them hotly to the town, through which they pursued them out into the fields. The Treasurer with his mounted handful could not risk a charge and had to retreat with the rest. Hawkins had taken Rio de la Hacha with the loss of two men killed by the volley, and apparently not a single Spanish life had been lost.

The Treasurer was still obdurate. All the valuables had already been removed to a distant hiding-place, and he sent word that the capture of the town would not extort his licence to trade. Hawkins threatened to burn the houses in default, and without his orders the sailors set fire to some of them. He had the blaze put out after considerable damage had been done. Castellanos sent in another defiance by the hands of some Spaniards who wished to see what had happened to their property. Hawkins promised these men that if trade were allowed he would pay for all the damage, and they went away better disposed towards him than to their own commander. Then a negro came in, a runaway slave of the Treasurer's, who offered as the price of his liberty to show where the valuables were concealed. Hawkins sent out a party and took possession of these goods (gold and pearls included). It was the final stroke. The Spaniards revolted against Castellanos and insisted that he should negotiate, and after further angry protests he gave in. During this scene he uttered a notable testimonial to his adversary—'There is not one of you that knoweth John Hawkins. He is such a man that any man talking with him hath no power to deny him anything he doth request.'

So it all ended in peace and profitable trade. Hawkins gave sixty slaves for the burning of the houses and sold about two hundred more for gold and pearls and hides, and also disposed of his English cloth and hardware. Castellanos wrote a letter of justification to the King in which with some skilful omissions and exaggerations he contrived to put a good face on the matter. For example, he mentioned the negroes given in compensation—'some were children under six years of age, and some were old men and women over a hundred years'—but

said nothing of the far larger number obtained in trade, and he accounted for the 4000 gold *pesos* which were paid for the latter as being a ransom extorted by Hawkins for sparing the remainder of the town 'including its holy church'. But one point in his report constitutes a black charge against Hawkins, who is alleged to have handed over, as part of the bargain, the runaway slave who had informed him of the concealed treasure. This unfortunate was executed by the Spaniards when they recovered him. The story appears to be true, although it may not be the whole truth. Perhaps Hawkins stilled his conscience by exacting some pledge of pardon which the Spaniards violated. But it is more likely that his conscience gave him no trouble at all. To the European the African was a chattel who had no rights and could be done no wrong. And Castellanos does not report the incident to cast obloquy upon Hawkins but to merit the royal approval for sacrificing his own private property to the needs of justice.

From Rio de la Hacha the expedition went on westward to Santa Marta, a small but prosperous place. Here there was no unpleasantness but only a farce staged with the connivance of an easy-going governor. Hawkins first went on shore and had a private conference with the Spaniard, and then returned to his ship to organise the capture of the town. It was done in convincing style—Hawkins in full armour at the head of his landing-party, great ordnance fired from his ships well wide of the mark, an old house burnt, the governor's credit with higher authority preserved, and nobody hurt. For two or three weeks the English stayed there on cordial terms with their hosts to the accompaniment of compliments, banqueting and profitable trade, and then they sailed away with only sixty negroes remaining unsold.

Cartagena, the last port westwards on the Main, presented a different problem. It was large and strongly fortified and garrisoned by 500 Spanish infantry besides Indian auxiliaries. Here there was no question of forcing trade and little hope that the authorities would connive at it, for even the experienced Spanish despatch-writer would have found it hard to make the King believe that he had been overcome by an expedition that now numbered less than 400 men. Hawkins asked licence to trade and the governor firmly refused, after which there was nothing more to be done. But on an island in the great bay of Cartagena there was a pleasure resort frequented by the citizens, and here the English found a stock of wines and other refreshments. Hawkins forbade his men to touch these goods until their owners conveyed word to him secretly that he might take them and leave English wares at his discretion. This was accordingly done and was the only trade effected at Cartagena.

Hawkins now prepared for his homeward passage, having made a difficult but successful commercial venture. Captain Bland in his Portuguese prize remained in company, but the other Frenchman squared accounts and departed on an enterprise of his own. This reduced the squadron to seven sail.¹ Although there were some negroes left, Hawkins meant to take them to England, and the narrator of the best account of the voyage says that he intended not to touch at any further Spanish port. He was somewhat straitened for victuals, but had just enough for a fair passage home.

The way was through the western Caribbean and out

¹ The numbers of Hawkins's ships are variously given in the different Spanish reports. This was because the large ships' boats were sometimes stowed or towed and not counted by observers, and sometimes sailed and reckoned as independent vessels.

through the Florida Channel with the Gulf Stream. Off the western end of Cuba ill-luck set in with the first of a series of blows that were to end in disaster. A heavy gale struck the fleet. It did not overwhelm the well-found vessels, although one parted company, but it nearly destroyed the *Jesus of Lubeck*. Her ancient hull strained, fastenings loosened, and seams opened. Water poured in below, and rotten spars carried away aloft. By Hawkins's seamanship and the toil of men pumping for their lives she was kept afloat, but she was in no condition to face the broad Atlantic. The gale passed, and in ordinary circumstances the obvious course would have been to transfer crew and stores and abandon her. She would have been worth nothing if brought home, and in fact was worth nothing when she left Plymouth. But the circumstances were peculiar. The *Jesus* was the Queen's investment in the enterprise, and the Queen contributed her ships always on the same terms, that if they were lost the loss was hers, but that if they came home they must be put in repair at the expense of the whole syndicate. To repair the *Jesus* would have been almost equivalent to buying a new ship, and Hawkins, as a principal adventurer, would have been in pocket by letting her sink. His honour forbade it. He would stick to her, cost what it might, 'because that she was the Queen's Majesty's ship and that she should not perish under his hand'. So did this man serve his Queen, uncontaminated by his dealings with those men of easy honour who served the King of Spain.

He sought on the coast of Florida for a haven in which to careen the ship and stop the worst leaks. No suitable place could be found, and another gale drove her southwards towards the Mexican shore of the Gulf. Hawkins had no pilot for these waters. He fell in with a

Spanish ship whose captain told him that the only available port was San Juan de Ulua, the haven from which the Mexican silver mines shipped their output to Spain. San Juan promised to serve Hawkins's necessities in repairs and re-victualling, but there was a further complication in that the annual *flota* or treasure-fleet was expected shortly to arrive from Seville to collect the silver. The *flota* would be convoyed by ships of war and full of armed men. How would Hawkins fare at their hands if they caught him with his flagship dismantled? It was a serious risk, but there was no alternative if the *Jesus* was to be preserved, and he steered for San Juan.

As he drew near the place, sailing in line ahead with the *Jesus* leading, he hoisted the royal standards of England, so faded by frequent use that the lions and fleurs-de-lys were indistinguishable at a distance; and at the same time he commanded that no Cross of St. George should be displayed. The officials at San Juan de Ulua thought that it was their own plate-fleet approaching and went out to welcome it. Too late they saw their mistake, but Hawkins ordered them on board and took them in with him; and as he entered the anchorage the unwary garrison fired a salute under the impression that the *flota* had arrived. Then they realised that they had to do with strangers and feared the worst. They were seen bolting in haste out of their battery and escaping for all they were worth. Hawkins had gained peaceful entry into a port that could have been held against him. He calmed the panic and promised that no harm should be done to men or goods. He requested victuals and facilities for repairs and undertook to pay for them. But for the menace of the plate-fleet all would have been fair. Two days later the plate-fleet came in

sight, thirteen sail of large ships drawing near across the lonely waters of the Gulf.

San Juan de Ulua was a small place, almost unoccupied save at the plate-fleet season, but it was the only harbour on the coast. Its anchorage was between a low island and the mainland, and on the island was a battery containing a dozen guns. Hawkins took possession of these guns and mounted others from the ships, and was thus in a position to hold San Juan against the superior fleet outside. Fifteen miles up the coast was the town of Vera Cruz, which had no harbour, and it was from there that the highroad ran inland to the city of Mexico.

For his own safety it was essential for Hawkins to keep the Spanish fleet out of San Juan until he himself was ready to leave. But to do so would have entailed serious complications. It was a royal fleet as he claimed his own to be, and it had on board Don Martin Enriquez, the new Viceroy of Mexico, than whom no Spanish subject ranked higher. To deny access would be an act of war, and Hawkins had no authority to commit his sovereign to that. 'Fearing the Queen's indignation' he decided that the plate-fleet must come in, whatever the consequences to himself. After six years striving for a lawful trade in the Indies he could not now commit an act which would place him in the category of the French pirates. But he sent out an envoy to demand strict pledges from the Spaniards as the price of their entry.

It was not to the taste of Don Martin Enriquez. Here at his first approach to his new kingdom a Lutheran corsair was making terms to permit him to land. The humiliation was intolerable. At first he said he would fight his way in; but his officers told him that it could not be done in face of the batteries. Then they sat down to take counsel.

The English have always contended that the affair at San Juan was a piece of deliberate treachery, and the recently discovered Spanish documents show that it was—deliberate and premeditated in cold blood. The council agreed that Hawkins's terms must be accepted until the *flota* was safely berthed in San Juan and that then he must be attacked unawares and punished for his presumption. One of his demands was the exchange of hostages of rank in pledge of good faith. Since it appeared likely that the Spanish hostages would have their throats cut when the grand treachery should manifest itself, it was determined to send some common soldiers and sailors in officers' clothes. But as these common persons evinced a strong disinclination for the job and there was a danger that they would give the game away, ten Spanish gentlemen had to volunteer in their places. So it was all worked out and written minutes were afterwards made for the King's information, signed by Don Martin and his officers. They felt no compunction at what they were doing, and no shame that it should be placed on record. And yet Don Martin was a man of upright character and of stainless honour according to his lights. An investigator of his Mexican career has described him as 'a splendid viceroy'. It was simply that for a Spanish nobleman the Lutheran corsair had no human status, as the poor African had none for the English slaver. All students of the sixteenth century are made aware from time to time that an effort is required for a comprehension of its ethics.

Hawkins was not a corsair in any true sense of the word, but we may grant that Don Martin did not know that. However much the officials on the Main were hand-in-glove with the Englishman and complimented him on the honesty of his dealings, they wrote home in a

very different style, making his collusive attacks all one with the savage depredations of the French and imploring the King to spare more money for his colonies' defence. It is doubtful whether Philip understood the whole truth about the slaving voyages.

The agreement then was made—no hostilities, ten hostages a side, Hawkins to refit and revictual on proper payment and meanwhile to hold the island batteries, and no armed Spaniards to land on the island. Don Martin wrote him a personal letter in cordial terms, and as soon as the wind served weighed anchor and passed into the narrow haven, having first sent to Vera Cruz for all its soldiers and taken them on board under cover of night. As soon as he was in he called another council and perfected the plan—so many men to board the *Jesus* and the *Minion* from the vessels berthed near them, so many to mingle with the English on the island with daggers under their clothes, the Vera Cruz soldiers to stand below decks ready to jump ashore and rush the batteries, and—this the English allege—one of the hostages detailed to stab Hawkins at the sound of the trumpet that was to set all in motion. This latter circumstance is not alluded to in the Spanish evidence, but there can be no inherent reason for disbelieving it.

The plan partly succeeded and partly failed. The Spaniards combined to blame their vice-admiral for giving the signal prematurely, but the English said that it was done by the Viceroy when Hawkins sent Robert Barrett to expostulate with him on some suspicious movements. Hawkins was on the alert, and the attempt to board his ships was beaten off by his vigorous leadership. The English on the island were caught off their guard. Some were killed by the ostensibly unarmed

Spaniards with whom they were fraternising, and the batteries were rushed by the soldiers brought from Vera Cruz. Hawkins hauled off the *Jesus* into the centre of the haven and with her guns sank one and burned the other of the two Spanish ships-of-war which had escorted the *flota*. But the *Jesus* was unrigged and it was impossible to get her away, while the fire from the island batteries made her abandonment imperative. Hawkins ordered the *Minion* and Drake's *Judith* to take the men and goods out of the *Jesus*. Drake's small vessel took her quota and retired to wait out of range. The *Minion* received the treasure gained in the season's trade, but before she could transfer the victuals from her consort the Spaniards fired two of their own ships and sent them down wind upon the English. At the approach of the fireships a panic broke out and the *Jesus* was hurriedly abandoned. All who were able jumped to the *Minion's* deck, and she quitted San Juan with two hundred men and scarcely enough victuals to feed them for a fortnight. The Spaniards therefore captured the *Jesus*. They found on board Hawkins's table service of silver plate and fifty-seven negroes, but nothing else of value. They found also their ten hostages unharmed. The small vessels *Angel* and *Swallow* and the Frenchman's caravel were also lost.

Hawkins and Drake anchored out of range but within sight of the Spaniards, who admitted that they made no attempt to pursue. In the darkness Drake sailed away. Hawkins wrote in his published account of the voyage: 'So with the *Minion* only and the *Judith* (a small bark of 50 tons) we escaped, which bark the same night forsook us in our great misery'. The matter has never been explained, and that is all we know of it, save that

THE THIRD VOYAGE OF JOHN HAWKINS

twenty years afterwards William Borough taunted Drake with having deserted his leader at San Juan.¹

The *Minion*, short of food, made a tragic voyage home. So desperate was the prospect that some were in favour of going back to surrender to the Spaniards. Hawkins set on shore a hundred men at their own request on an uninhabited part of the Mexican coast, and most of them made for the nearest settlement and gave themselves up. With the other hundred he sailed for England. Their sufferings were dreadful, and it was reported by the Spanish ambassador that only fifteen survived to enter Plymouth Sound in January 1569. Drake had come in five days earlier after a passage of whose details nothing is known.

The 'third troublesome voyage' had thus ended all hopes of a recognised English trade in the West Indies. More than that, it was largely responsible for ending the eighty years period of Anglo-Spanish alliance and amity. In so far as the Spanish War was caused by the English sea-adventurers, this voyage was the turning-point, for the treachery of San Juan was never forgiven. It coincided with a change in the European situation which also drove England and Spain apart. As will be shown in the next chapter, there is reason for regarding the winter of 1568-69 rather than that of 1558-59 as the true beginning of the Elizabethan age.

¹ Sir Julian Corbett, in *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, I, 121, wrote: 'It is difficult to understand wherein Drake's alleged offence lay. Nothing was more natural than that the two ships should part company in the night.' Corbett thought that the ships were under way, but the Spanish accounts agree that at nightfall both were anchored in sight of San Juan, and imply that Hawkins was there on the following morning.

CHAPTER VI

THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD TAKES SHAPE

A SYSTEM of European politics which had lasted for half a century dissolved in the first decade of Elizabeth's reign and was replaced by another. This can be clearly seen by historians of a later age but was not so readily apparent to the statesmen of the time, whose outlook and evaluation of events were shaped by what had gone before and not by what was to follow. The outstanding features of the old system had been the two combinations which had fought one another in the long Hapsburg-Valois wars: on the one side France, strong, united and nationalist under its active kings Francis I and Henry II, allied to Scotland under its Stuart dynasty; on the other the Hapsburg empire of Spain, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy, geographically separated, lacking a common national spirit, collectively mighty but never able to put forth its might, yet united in loyalty to its great ruler Charles V, and allied to the Tudor monarchy of England. The ding-dong contest between these two combinations really ended in the momentous twelve months which witnessed the deaths of Charles V and Henry II and the accession of Elizabeth, but the ending as registered in the Treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis was so tame and unemphatic that none realised that a great period had closed. Its ghost, at first solid-looking but gradually growing less substantial, loomed over the next ten years, and vanished

rather suddenly with a general recognition, at the date we have now reached, that the times had veritably changed.

The religious disruption of Christendom, begun by Luther and continued by Calvin, although in fact the greatest change in the century, had never succeeded in dominating politics before Câteau-Cambrésis. Its problems were urgent, but the attitude of both French and Hapsburg sovereigns had been that of pressing their war to its finish first and dealing with religion afterwards. In Germany indeed the Lutherans had extorted a grudging settlement from Charles V, but elsewhere the matter was still in controversy. After 1558 religious events moved rapidly and attracted prime attention, leading ultimately to a new conflict of Catholic versus Protestant which cut across the lines of the old combinations.

In England Elizabeth made the state Protestant and based her fortunes on the loyalty of the Protestant section of her people. In Scotland Knox led Calvinism to rapid and permanent success, which entailed the end of the ancient alliance with the Valois. In the Netherlands a Calvinist minority incurred a savage persecution, and the excesses of both sides gave bitterness to a quite independent dissatisfaction of patriotic burghers and nobles against the alien rule of Philip II. The result was the Revolt of the Netherlands. In France the power of the Valois monarchy died with Henry II, and the Calvinistic Huguenots were emboldened to push for control of the realm in defiance of the Catholic majority and the feeble successors of the dead king; and in consequence the Wars of Religion endured almost to the end of the century. Meanwhile on the other side the decrees of the Council of Trent revitalised the Catholic

Church by resolving doubts on its doctrines, and girded its members to a movement for the recovery of all it had lost; and of this movement Philip II, the mightiest Catholic sovereign, became the temporal head, with a mission to achieve the triumph of the Counter-Reformation.

Some dates will give significance to the above generalisations. Elizabeth passed in 1559 the Acts of Supremacy (as against the papal jurisdiction) and Uniformity (in use of the Anglican prayer-book), which together furnished an enduring definition of the religious policy of her reign. In Scotland the Protestants ended a victorious war against the Catholics and their French allies in 1560, and thenceforward Mary Stuart, the Catholic Queen, steadily lost power until she fled into England in fear of her life in 1568. From the Netherlands Philip was obliged to remove his chosen minister Granvelle in 1564. Two years later the Calvinists resorted to general mob-violence and the destruction of churches, while the King retaliated by sending the Duke of Alva with a Spanish army to restore order. The first regular campaign of the rebels—a complete failure—was led by the Prince of Orange in 1568. In France the first religious war ended with a compromise in 1563, and for a time it seemed that the authority of the Crown might revive. But the Huguenots were a revolutionary party, and a second outbreak occurred in 1567 and a third in 1568; and this last provided an event decisive of much that was to follow, for in it the seaport of La Rochelle on the Biscay coast was adopted as the Huguenot capital. A campaign by swarms of privateers was inaugurated against all 'papist' shipping, Spanish and Flemish as well as French. The booty financed the Huguenot armies on land, and the prospect of sharing

it attracted Dutchmen and Englishmen to the cause. The sea is international, not local, and this transference of the Huguenot effort to the sea combined the local wars of religion into a grand European contest. The sudden prominence of La Rochelle in 1568 is the greatest single event of the series. Incidentally it helped to ease the French harrying of the Caribbean by employing the rovers nearer home, but it did so just at the moment when the English seamen, outraged by San Juan de Ulua, were ready to take up the rôle of the French.

From the general scene we turn to the fortunes of England and her relations with Spain. Until 1568 the French alliance with Scotland and the claim of the half-French Mary Stuart to the English throne were considered detrimental to Spanish interests, and Philip had therefore supported Elizabeth, much as he disliked her religious policy. When Mary lost her Scottish realm and became at once a refugee and a prisoner in England, and France was unable to do anything for her, Spanish views changed. A new ambassador, Guerau de Spes, replaced de Silva in 1568, and his aim was to maintain the Anglo-Spanish alliance by substituting a Catholic England for Elizabeth's Protestant régime. He favoured Mary Stuart and the Catholic nobles who thought she was hardly treated, and he intrigued with them for the overthrow of Cecil, whom he regarded as the mainstay of Elizabeth's throne. But de Spes, headstrong and indiscreet, was no match for Cecil in diplomacy. The Englishman speedily read his mind and took measures accordingly. Cecil was perhaps the first statesman to recognise that the old diplomatic system was dead, and that the future was to turn upon religion. He saw natural allies in the Huguenots and

Dutch rebels, and enemies in the Spanish army in the Netherlands, and he understood that England's best defence was in the sea-power of the Protestant combination, which might cut Philip's communications through the Narrow Seas.

Alva had beaten the Prince of Orange in the field and driven him out of the Netherlands, but the provinces were by no means pacified. They were held down only by military force. The upkeep of Alva's troops was therefore essential, and for their payment Philip raised a loan from the bankers of Genoa. With strange ineptitude he despatched this money by the sea route from Spain to Antwerp in small vessels unarmed and unescorted. The Huguenots of La Rochelle scented rich prey and chased the treasure-carriers, which were obliged to take refuge in Plymouth and Southampton. The money was thus in the power of the English government, which knew that it was destined for the maintenance of Alva's army, and which further knew that if de Spes had his way the ultimate employment of that army would be to overthrow Protestantism in England. The temptation was obvious, but Cecil, like John Hawkins, had a preference for orderly ways and would do nothing that was outside the law.

At that juncture, in December 1568, William Hawkins at Plymouth heard a story from Spain to the effect that his brother John had been attacked and overthrown in the Indies. It seems to have been an imaginary yarn not inspired by the actual events at San Juan de Ulua, but by a coincidence it was essentially true. William Hawkins wrote to London suggesting the detention of the treasure in retaliation, but Cecil was not prepared to act upon rumours. He did, however, examine the London agents of the Genoese bankers, and

they revealed the vital fact that the treasure was as yet legally theirs and not Philip's: the loan was not to be effective until the money was delivered at Antwerp.

Meanwhile Guerau de Spes was intensely anxious about the fate of the treasure, and was allowing his hatred and suspicion of Cecil to get the better of his prudence. It was unfortunate for Spain that the cool and courtly de Silva had been replaced by an incompetent blusterer. De Spes was sure that the English meant to seize the money, and when he heard that it had been unladen and taken ashore at Southampton and Plymouth he assumed the worst. In fact this had been done on the reasonable ground that it was unsafe in the ships, since the Huguenots were gathering to enter the harbours and cut it out; and at the moment negotiations were proceeding for its safe-conduct to the Netherlands. De Spes, however, wrote to Alva and Philip that the treasure had been virtually seized by Elizabeth, and advocated the arrest of all English merchants and goods in retaliation. By existing treaties an arrest was lawful only after formal complaint of grievance and denial of redress, and no such process had been carried out. Since both Brussels and Madrid complied with their ambassador's advice, Elizabeth was able to complain of breach of treaty and unwarranted aggression and to arrest all Spanish and Flemish goods in England, to a much greater value than the English goods detained abroad. Then, as a separate piece of business, the English government announced that it had decided to borrow the Genoese treasure with its owners' consent. The latter was doubtless given because it was obvious that for Elizabeth to send the wealth on its way without her escort would be equivalent to presenting it to the rovers. Thus the skill of Cecil, who had foreseen every

move, placed England completely in the right in the sphere of legal argument. But the real significance of the affair was in its demonstration of Protestant seapower.

The breach of intercourse was a blow to English trade. The chief export of cloth had hitherto been made to Antwerp, for distribution throughout Germany, and the next most important market had been Spain, whence English products were sent on to the Mediterranean. Cecil appears to have foreseen a quarrel before the incident of the treasure arose, and it was no doubt the arrival of Alva's army in Flanders that aroused his alarm. He had already arranged to transfer the staple of the German cloth trade from Antwerp to Hamburg, and this was now done without a hitch. In 1569 two rich cloth fleets sailed from London to Hamburg, and the indispensability of Antwerp was disproved. A substitute for the Spanish market was less easy to find, but something was ultimately done by patching up the long quarrel with Portugal in the hope that Lisbon might take the place of Seville as a distributing base.

Meanwhile the maritime difficulties of Spain increased. In 1569 the Prince of Orange adopted the Huguenot policy and began to issue commissions to Dutch privateers. English adventurers joined the Frenchmen and Dutchmen, and for the next three years the seas were swept by the rovers so effectively that peaceful commerce was threatened with extinction. Not only was communication cut between Spain and the Netherlands, but for a time the English merchants made great profit from the situation. Most of the booty was brought into English ports, and the traders of London picked up at bargain prices the rich tropical goods for which they had had to pay heavily at Seville and

Antwerp in time of peace. A still more important effect was the thorough kindling of the Netherland revolt. Orange's movement of 1568 had been premature. He invaded the country with German mercenaries and was beaten by Alva's Spaniards, without being joined by the people he came to deliver. It looked as though Alva's terrorism had cowed the spirit of resistance. The sea campaign worked in two ways. First, it deprived Alva of money and forced him to impose crushing taxes, by which he alienated the Catholic majority in common with the Protestants. Secondly, the Dutch Sea Beggars¹ preyed upon all Catholic shipping, including that of their own countrymen. Spain was impotent to defend its subjects, whose respect for its power thus diminished, while the rebels were making strong appeal to the patriotism of every Netherlander. All motives combined to sway opinion, with the result that by 1572 the Netherlands were ready to rise spontaneously and call upon Orange to lead them in a struggle wherein they were never again to lay down their arms until independence was won. The conversion of the people from the timorous neutrality of 1568 to the revolutionary zeal of 1572 is one of the greatest examples of the influence of sea-power upon history.

The English government, pleased with the troubles of Spain, was not disposed to convert this satisfactory half-war into an irrevocable declaration. When John Hawkins returned in January 1569, he and his brother asked for letters of reprisal for the losses of San Juan de Ulua. They did not obtain them, since it was less obtrusive to allow them to seek their remedy under Orange or Huguenot commissions for which the Queen could disclaim responsibility; and in 1569 captured goods

¹ A term of contempt used of the rebels and adopted by them.

poured into Plymouth, taken by the ships of the Hawkins firm and of their Huguenot allies. The foreign Protestants were England's first line of defence, and England judiciously helped them when necessary. After the Huguenot defeat of Jarnac in March 1569, La Rochelle required assistance, and John Hawkins was sent with a fleet of armed merchantmen and privateers. He carried arms, munitions, money, provisions and English volunteers, and brought away the wines and salt of the Biscay coast, bells from Catholic churches to be cast into ordnance, and the booty taken by the Rochellais at sea. Later in the year the gentry of Devon raised a body of horse for service under Coligny, and in it Walter Raleigh, aged seventeen, first gained experience of war.

Guerau de Spes, exiled amid the English enemy, fuming at these outrages against the Catholic cause, baffled and mystified by Cecil in all attempts to gain information, became ever more convinced that the overthrow of Elizabeth and her minister was essential, and that Alva's soldiers were the men to do the work. Alva, who had made the false move of the arrest on the ambassador's advice, had thenceforward no confidence in him and looked coldly on all his English plans. To Alva it seemed that the primary task was to hold down the Netherlands, and that to adventure in England was a folly which would lose all. In the main Philip agreed with Alva, and Don Guerau was left without support and yet dangerously free to compromise his master. We know now that Philip and Alva were wrong. By shirking the tussle with England, the corner-stone of the Protestant combination, they lost the Netherlands and ruined Spain. England was weak and disunited in 1569, half the nobles hating the government, and Mary Stuart

a plausible alternative. Then, if ever, the Armada might have had a chance. Yet it would not have been a brilliant chance, for Spain also was weak and nearly bankrupt, and her ambassador, upon whom much would depend, a man certain to commit every blunder conceivable.

The malcontent nobles were the chief peril to Protestant England. They did not avow that they desired to depose Elizabeth, although that would probably have been the consequence of their success. Their programme was to eliminate Cecil, make reconciliation with Rome and Spain, and have Mary Stuart fully recognised as heir to the throne. Their leaders were the Duke of Norfolk and the Earls of Arundel, Westmoreland and Northumberland. Guerau de Spes was assiduous in egging them on and promising Spanish aid. But in 1569 the plan failed. The Earl of Leicester, admitted to the conspiracy because he disliked Cecil, nevertheless betrayed it to him. Norfolk and Arundel were placed under arrest. The northern earls took the field in the Rising of the North. Mary Stuart was removed from their reach, Alva would not send a man, and the movement collapsed of its own feebleness. The leaders fled overseas, and stern retribution was levied on their followers.

It was not the end but the beginning of a permanent conspiracy between the English Catholics and the Catholic powers abroad, only to be stilled after eighteen years by the execution of the Scottish queen and the transformation of the broil into open war with Spain. The danger at home, the Protestant wars on the continent, and the operations of the English sea-captains in the Channel and on the oceans, are all one story, from the crisis of 1568-69 to the end of the age.

The next phase opened with the bull of excommunication and deposition of Elizabeth issued by Pope Pius V in the spring of 1570. Philip, having decided not to engage in open war with the Queen, was displeased by the bull. He regarded it as an attempt to force his hand and did not publish it in his dominions. But it was surreptitiously published in England, and it was followed up by the despatch of the papal agent Roberto Ridolfi with a mission to revive the conspiracy that had failed in 1569. Ridolfi came ostensibly on legitimate commercial business and was thus able to move in London freely and openly. He contrived to see the Duke of Norfolk, then living under open arrest in his London house, and the Bishop of Ross, Mary Stuart's ambassador at the English court; and of course Guerau de Spes welcomed him with open arms. In the first half of 1571 the Ridolfi Plot took shape—the malcontent nobles to rise with Norfolk at their head, a force from Spain and another from the Netherlands to land on the English coast, Elizabeth to be deposed, and Mary to mount the throne with the Duke of Norfolk as her fourth husband. Those who had all to gain and nothing to lose, Ridolfi, Mary and Guerau de Spes, were enthusiastic. Norfolk and the noblemen were not. They were distinctly hesitant, and made it a condition that the Spaniards must land first and that the rising should begin afterwards. Ridolfi had agreed to this on the assurances of de Spes, who was acting beyond his instructions. When Ridolfi went over to Brussels to secure Alva's consent he met with a rebuff. The great duke thought the plot chimerical, Norfolk a coward, and Ridolfi a windbag. He refused to send a man until he had certain news that Elizabeth was dead. Thus an assassination, hitherto implied rather than expressed, out of regard for the

tender consciences of the Norfolk party, had now to be added to the overloaded structure of the conspiracy. Ridolfi went on by way of Rome to Spain, where he had a better reception; for, as will be shown, Philip was already being independently converted to the view that a sudden stroke by an expeditionary force was feasible.

Alva's judgment of the plot and its author was correct. The combination was too complicated, and its personnel too scattered and too much at cross-purposes, to have much chance of acting according to plan. Its construction was the work of months, during which de Spes, Norfolk, Mary and the Bishop of Ross were all under the eye of Cecil, who had early intelligence that something was in the wind and watched them keenly. And Ridolfi was indeed an imprudent conspirator. He blabbed to the Catholic refugees at Brussels, among whom spies were at work, and he blundered in sending over to England some ciphered letters in the same packet with the key by which they could be read, carried by a guileless messenger who walked straight into the clutches of Cecil's agents. Before the plot was completed its detection had begun.

John Hawkins bore a part in its unravelling. The ten English hostages of San Juan de Ulua and twenty other prisoners of that occasion had been shipped to Spain in 1569. They were imprisoned at Seville and left to starve in a noisome cell. Several died before Hugh Tipton, the English merchant, heard of their plight and relieved them from his own purse. He then went to the Spanish authorities and shamed them into providing proper rations, and himself carried to England a letter from the hostages describing their miserable state. John Hawkins was naturally ready to go to any length for the rescue of his friends; and Hawkins on his mettle was

capable of much. In 1570 he called on Guerau de Spes and asked for his good offices. They met several times, and each judged the other to be a promising tool for the furtherance of projects dear to the heart.

Then came Ridolfi with his plot, into which Hawkins neatly inserted himself as the linch-pin of the projected invasion. In time of peace the Queen's Navy was stationed in the Medway, from which it was possible to turn out at short notice a force sufficient to counter any stroke from the Netherlands. The guard of the western approach to the Channel was committed to the ship-owners of the Devon seaports, at this time under the general command of John Hawkins. The upshot of his arrangements with de Spes was as follows. He was to keep on a war footing twelve well-armed ships. On the signal being given, he was to lead them eastwards to join Alva and cover the latter's crossing in face of the Medway fleet. At the same time this move would leave the west unprotected, and the Duke of Medina Celi was to sail unopposed from Spain and throw a second army into the English realm. Hawkins not only made de Spes believe all this, but he made Philip also believe it. In the spring and summer of 1571 he twice sent a trusty agent to Spain. This man, George Fitzwilliam, had interviews with the King himself, and on the second occasion came away with what was in effect a treaty signed between His Majesty and John Hawkins. The Englishman was to perform the naval service described above, and in return was to receive the immediate release of his men at Seville, compensation for their sufferings, pardon for past offences in the Indies, a patent of nobility, and the expenses for the upkeep of a fighting fleet of 3170 tons with 1585 men and 406 guns.

From the moment of coming to details with de Spes,

Hawkins had taken every step with the knowledge and approval of Cecil and Elizabeth. They were gaining invaluable information from the inmost hearts of the enemy, and their thrifty souls must have rejoiced at the prospect of the defence of the realm being defrayed by the persons who were proposing to invade it. Not even Napoleon ever made war support war so effectively. As for Hawkins, we have only to recall San Juan de Ulua to imagine the fate of a Spanish army escorted by him across the Narrow Seas. It did not come to that. When Fitzwilliam returned with the treaty at the end of August, Cecil was already in a position to strike. He placed before the Queen evidence of Norfolk's guilt. The duke was sent to the Tower, to be tried and ultimately executed for high treason. His English confederates were cowed into amendment of their evil courses. Philip and Alva immediately dropped the invasion plan and so saved some Spanish soldiers from a watery grave. Mary Stuart and her correspondence were for a time more strictly supervised. The Bishop of Ross saved his neck by full confession and a pious admonition to his mistress to engage in no more Italian practices. Guerau de Spes, much to his wrath and astonishment, was told to leave the country. He retaliated by hiring two gunmen to shoot Cecil, and only when they had been arrested before getting into action did he comply with the order and take himself off. He can hardly be described as a great diplomatist, but at least he had the merit of not knowing when he was beaten; months after his expulsion he was still assuring Alva and the King that Hawkins was the man who could open for them the gates of England. In fact the Spaniards never knew that Hawkins had deceived them. He himself had received his patent of nobility, 'from which', he remarked

to Cecil, 'God deliver me', and the release of the surviving Englishmen at Seville, but apparently not the money for the services of his fleet. The liberated Englishmen were not the whole of those who had been captured. They did not include those detained in Mexico nor a party sent subsequently to Spain. Of those unfortunates Robert Barrett and three more were burnt by the Inquisition, and many others sentenced to flogging and service in the galleys.

Cecil, created Lord Burghley in 1571, had not passively awaited the development of the Spanish menace. He had sought an ally in the former enemy of Valois France. The Valois, weakened by the civil wars, found their circumstances changed. Themselves no longer in a position to make use of Mary Stuart, they had seen her cause appropriated by the Spaniards, and they realised that a successful revolution in England would help Philip to the overlordship of Europe. Thus Catherine de Medici and Charles IX countenanced Burghley's plan for a marriage of Elizabeth to the Duke of Anjou. It came to nothing owing to religious difficulties, but its canvassing impressed Philip, and still more Alva, with the need for caution, since a war with England and France together would mean the certain loss of the Netherlands. Although there was no marriage, Burghley did achieve the Treaty of Blois in the spring of 1572, whereby England and France mutually agreed to give military aid if either were attacked by Spain. It was a hollow reconciliation, but it served its turn for the moment by confirming Philip's distaste for an English war.

Meanwhile the Sea Beggars and their miscellaneous associates in Channel freebooting were developing into a nuisance. At first they had brought profit to England

by disposing of their booty in her ports, but now they were bleeding commerce to death, and general impoverishment was in sight. By 1572 it was realised also that Philip's mood was no longer aggressive and that it might be possible to restore trade with his dominions. Ostensibly for these reasons the English government took a momentous step. They gave notice to the freebooters to resort no more to English ports, and prohibited English subjects from buying the goods of the rovers or supplying them with munitions. Some historians have held that this was simply what it appeared to be, a measure for restoring order on the sea. Others have divined, on purely circumstantial evidence, an ulterior motive. What followed may have been unexpected by the Queen and Burghley, but on the whole it does not seem likely that they would have taken an important step without some calculation of the consequences. In any case the consequences were notable and not detrimental to England. For the Beggars, to whom a port somewhere was indispensable, moved off to the Dutch coast and there seized the town of Brille in April 1572. Soon afterwards Flushing fell likewise into their hands. From there the movement spread northwards through Zeeland and Holland. Town after town rose and evicted its Spanish garrison, and the real revolt of the Netherlands began. By midsummer it was clear that Alva had sufficient work in hand to keep him from thoughts of invading England for some time to come.

At the same time the Protestant cause was mounting in France. The third war had ended in 1570, with La Rochelle still at liberty to pursue its freebooting activities. There followed, during the negotiation of the Anjou marriage and the Treaty of Blois, a reconciliation between the Valois and the Huguenots. Coligny went

to court and gained the trust of Charles IX, and a marriage was arranged between the young Huguenot prince Henry of Navarre and the King's sister Marguerite de Valois. The watchword was that Frenchmen must bury their differences and unite against the ancient enemy Spain. Louis of Nassau, brother of the Prince of Orange, was allowed to cross from France into Flanders and seize Mons. Orange himself raised a force in Germany to co-operate, and Coligny's plan was that France should declare war and ensure the victory of Protestantism, at the same time conquering the southern Netherlands for herself.

Elizabeth was not overjoyed at the prospect. Philip in the Netherlands was a bad neighbour, but the French might well be worse, for they would be stronger. What the Queen really desired was that Philip should retain the sovereignty but withdraw his armies and tolerate Protestantism, in which case he would be powerless for offence. She was greatly alarmed at the possibility of a revitalised France entering on a career of conquest. She sent over Sir Humphrey Gilbert to the Netherlands with some thousands of English volunteers. Gilbert had no recognised status and could be disavowed at need, but he had urgent instructions to establish himself in the seaports and at all costs keep the French away from the coast.

The Queen was all for balance and compromise, but in 1572 things went from one violent extreme to the other. Catherine de Medici had made friends with the Huguenots because she feared the domination of the pro-Spanish Guises. In August she began to think that a war with Spain would make the Huguenots all-powerful, and she determined not to be led further in that direction. All the leading Huguenots were in Paris

for the wedding of Henry of Navarre, and their confident attitude infuriated their opponents. On the 22nd a Guisard shot at Coligny and wounded him. Next day Catherine conferred with Henry, Duke of Guise, and authorised him to murder the Huguenot chiefs. On the 24th the Massacre of St. Bartholomew began. Paris went rabid and France followed suit, and Coligny with thousands of his faith were slain. With his fall the Netherlands prospect changed. Orange, who had relied upon French help, had to retreat. His brother surrendered at Mons, and only the Dutch coast continued its stubborn resistance to Alva's veterans.

In England there was a temporary panic. In place of the secular menace of French conquest there loomed something worse, a combination of France and Spain to destroy Protestantism. But the fighting spirit of the continental Protestants saved the situation. The Dutch held out, and the surviving Huguenots took up arms and fought manfully. By 1573 the position had eased into the sort of compromise that suited England. Philip was not driven from the Netherlands, but neither was he their master. The Catholics were the stronger party in France, but not completely victorious; the fourth war ended with a peace that left La Rochelle still independent. And so it seemed likely to continue for some years to come.

English interests demanded a resumption of trade with Philip's dominions, and Philip was no less eager for better relations with the country which had shown its power to injure him. In 1573 they came to terms. The arrests were discontinued, and commerce restored to normal channels. The Queen's ships were for the first time sent out against the Channel rovers, and in a short campaign captured many of their vessels and

hundreds of their men. The financial claims and counter claims were adjusted by the Convention of Bristol in the following year. A calm period was thus inaugurated, yet it was not the calm of settled fair weather but rather the lull between two storms. The great disputes that shook the world were not adjusted. One of them was at the moment growing more acute, as will be told in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII

DRAKE IN THE CARIBBEAN

TO speak of 'the Tudor despotism' and to include under that heading the reign of Elizabeth is misleading. Despotism is the negation of freedom and the monopoly of initiative and enterprise by the State. The Queen ruled in a manner sensitive to public opinion, and her people were as free as it was possible for any in that age to be, with a freedom tempered by the preservation of public order. The government and the majority of its subjects worked together for the safeguard of liberty against the continental threat of despotism. The Crown kept general control of policy. Active subjects took the initiative in matters proper to private enterprise without being unduly hampered in the details of their proceedings; but the best of them submitted cheerfully to the curb when the wisdom of the State applied it. Outside their ranks there was of course a fringe of unlawful men, pirates and rebels, who repudiated discipline. But the abuse of liberty was in their case a testimony to its existence, for most of them could have been eliminated by a harsher rule. Spain under its despotism produced neither pirates nor legitimate private enterprise of any importance, and their absence was a sign of weakness and not of strength.

John Hawkins in 1570 furnished a good example of private initiative tempered by discipline. The impossibility of obtaining from Spanish justice any redress of

his own wrongs warranted his making his own reprisals. That was the established custom, with centuries of practice behind it. At the same time the country was in peril of war with Spain. Hawkins, with his intimate knowledge of what was going on in the Channel, understood better than anyone that Spain would have no chance in such a war unless she undertook serious rearmament and created a fighting navy. To that end she might apply the treasure from Mexico and Peru. He therefore suggested that he should serve his own cause and the country's by attacking the returning plate-fleet. For the purpose he offered ten of his own ships of war (the same which next year played their part in the Ridolfi plot) and desired two of the Queen's, he to pay for all munitions and equipment. He estimated the plate-fleet to be worth six millions of English money, and expected to take it entire 'for the extreme injuries offered unto this realm; which wrongs being satisfied with the costs, the great mass shall be at the courtesy of the Queen's Highness to restore or keep'. In other words, a successful issue would not by diplomatic rules constitute an act of war unless the Queen chose to make it so by keeping the whole of the proceeds; in which case it would pretty effectively preclude Spain from taking any warlike measures worthy of the name.

At first the Queen agreed, but later she cooled. A threat near home was always effective to make her veto a far-flung enterprise. A new Austrian bride for Philip II was about to sail from the Netherlands to Spain, royally escorted by every ship and man that Alva could spare. It was thought that he might spare an excess of men, sufficient to make a surprise landing on the English coast. The Queen's Navy was mobilised, with the Lord Admiral in person at its head; and as if that should

not suffice to shepherd the crowd of Flemish merchantmen down Channel, all private ships were requisitioned as well. Hawkins was told that he could not be spared until the peril was past. He submitted without complaint, although on our present knowledge the government seems to have been over-cautious. By the time the royal convoy reached Spain and the alarm had subsided, the plate-fleet had also come safely into port and the chance was gone.

The story of this affair shows that the Queen had no objection to reprisals, although it might be inexpedient to attempt them in the grand manner. They were therefore carried out in obscurer fashion by men of lower standing than Hawkins, and they gave the chance to one of these men to display his brilliant qualities and found his great career.

Drake had come home from San Juan de Ulua in 1569. He was at that time only a junior, and Hawkins, as we have seen, did not think well of his conduct after the fight, although he had undoubtedly recognised the ability of his young kinsman in the general course of the voyage. Drake's worst enemy could never have said that he lacked courage, although there were some who said that he lacked principle. That was most likely Hawkins's view, and subsequent transactions show that he forgave the incident as a venial fault and retained Drake in his employment.

Spanish documents record much activity by the French corsairs in the Caribbean in the early part of 1569, and it is possible that there were Englishmen in their company.¹ It has even been suggested that Drake

¹ Miss I. A. Wright's second volume, *Documents concerning English Voyages to the Spanish Main, 1569-1580*, Hakluyt Society, 1932, contains the relevant Spanish records for this period.

was one of them. Two known dates, however, are a difficulty. Towards the end of January Drake arrived at Plymouth from San Juan de Ulua, and was sent up to London to be examined by the Council; he can hardly have been free to go to sea again until well on in February. On 4 July he was again in England, for on that day he was married to Mary Newman at St. Budeaux. We have then four and a half months for a voyage to the Spanish Main and back. It was just possible, but on the whole is not probable, for it would have left little time for business on the scene of action. Between the two dates Drake's time is not accounted for, and he was not among the witnesses examined in the Admiralty Court at the enquiry into the affair at San Juan de Ulua. A late authority, not altogether reliable, says that he served at this period on board one of the Queen's ships. If so, it must have been one of the ships which convoyed the merchant fleet to Hamburg under the command of Sir William Winter, who returned at the beginning of June.

In 1570, according to evidence that has long been accessible, Drake went to the Caribbean with two ships, the *Dragon* and the *Swan*, and took a great deal of booty near Nombre de Dios and in the Chagres River. It would seem that this is a confusion of two stories, for the newly discovered Spanish documents show that these robberies took place early in 1571, and reveal no piratical successes in 1570. On the other hand, there is good evidence that two vessels belonging to Sir William Winter and his brother sailed early in that year for Guinea and thence proceeded to Hispaniola, where they traded in the manner of Hawkins. It seems possible that these were Drake's *Dragon* and *Swan*, and that he returned about the beginning of August from a voyage

which had been mainly commercial. In later times it is known that the Winters subscribed to Drake's expeditions and supplied ships to them, and that they did so in association with the Hawkinses. Drake's position in the early seventies was most likely that of a captain employed by the two families jointly.¹

In the following year, 1571, Drake was on the Main as early as February with the 25-ton *Swan* alone, and we have a variety of information on his doings. The outward-bound *galeones* for Nombre de Dios had arrived at that port, and there was a considerable movement of local shipping conveying small parcels of treasure to the *galeones* and distributing the European goods which they brought. The main stream of treasure was of course from Peru by way of Panama, and on this occasion Drake did not attempt to waylay it. He did, however, gain information about the mule-trains which conveyed the bullion across the Isthmus, and also about the topography and defences of Nombre de Dios; and he also captured considerable booty from the coastwise shipping. During part of his stay upon the coast he was in association with a crew of Frenchmen, and it appears that the French captain was one Nicholas des Isles, alias Bezellin, alias Leyerre. On a previous voyage this man had captured a runaway negro of Nombre de Dios, from whom he obtained information of the Cimaroons, tribes of escaped negroes and Indian women who lived in the wilderness of the Isthmus in defiance of Spanish efforts to exterminate them. Leyerre and Drake both realised the possible value of the Cimaroons as allies in an attack upon the mule-trains, and it was here that the

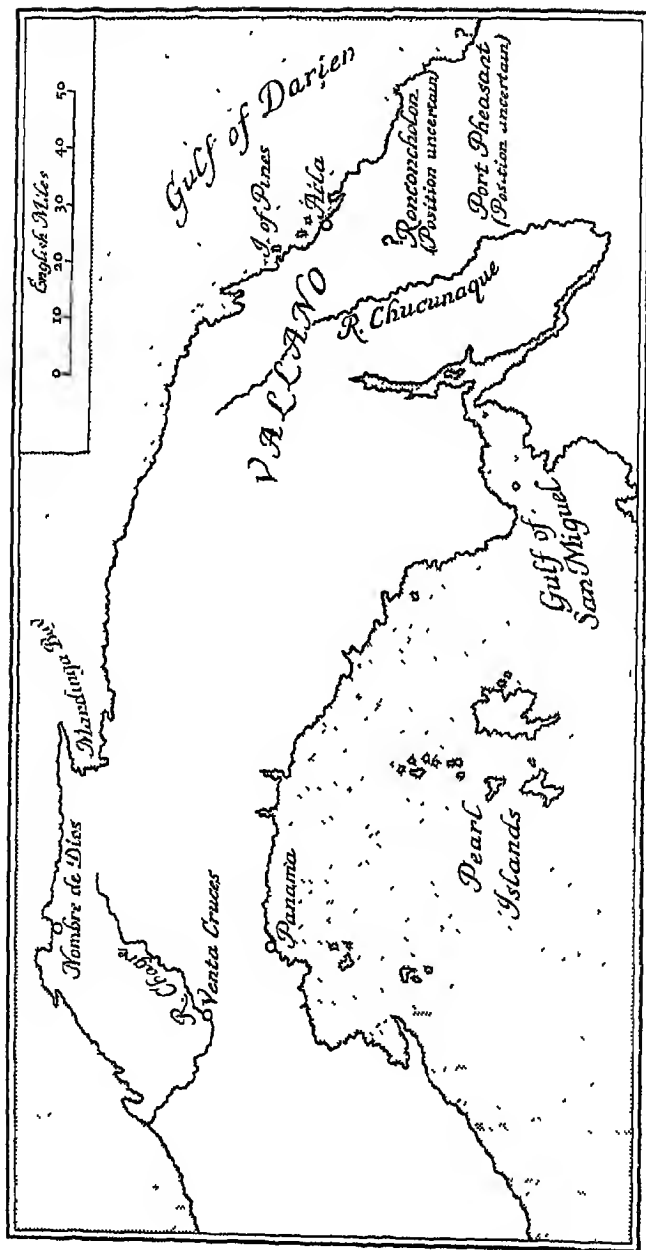
¹ Compare Sir J. S. Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, i, 148-52, with Wright, *op. cit.* pp. xxiv-xxvii.

project took shape which was to be so brilliantly carried out in 1572-73.

Drake's spoils in 1571 included small vessels taken on the coast near Nombre de Dios and also in the Chagres River. The Spanish reports of these robberies do not ascribe them to Drake by name, but their details show them to be relevant to the same exploits which the older evidence had related of Drake under the erroneous date 1570. He collected his prizes, booty and prisoners at a landlocked harbour which he named Port Pheasant, and on departing for England he left some of his stores buried there for use on a future occasion. Diego Flores de Valdes, the commander of the treasure fleet at Nombre de Dios, had two fighting galleons with which he sought to round up the corsairs. But against the *Swan* and similar small craft the galleons were useless. In the frequent calms of the Darien region the English used sweeps and rowed away from their pursuers, and when hotly chased in a good sailing breeze they made for shallow waters where the galleons could not follow.¹

If the new reading of the evidence is correct, it was in 1571 and not earlier that Drake first pursued the policy of active and unlimited reprisal as contrasted with that of illicit trade. In doing so he was following the example of the Huguenots and extending to the tropics the state of unofficial war already countenanced by the English government in home waters. He was working almost certainly under the direction of John Hawkins and Sir William Winter, the former holding a recognised command in the country's maritime defence, the latter as Surveyor of the Navy a high official of the State. Drake

¹ In addition to Corbett and Wright, see the French life of Drake by Léon Lemonnier, Paris, 1932. M. Lemonnier has used documents from the French archives which provide evidence convergent with that of Miss Wright's Spanish documents.



THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA
to illustrate the actions of Drake and Oxenham, 1571-77

therefore, by the peculiar method of devolution of responsibility practised in England, was an agent of the Queen's policy. He was levying war in the character of a privateer and was morally not a pirate. The Spanish government recognised no privateering even among its own subjects, and would undoubtedly have hanged Drake if it had caught him without a regular commission in his pocket. Nevertheless Philip was playing no more honourable game than Elizabeth, since his counterpart to privateering consisted in the instigation of treasonable plots by his ambassador.

Drake reached England in the summer of 1571 with plans matured for an attack on the main stream of the Peruvian treasure as it flowed through Nombre de Dios. He reckoned on success by surprise with a small force, a much less compromising method than Hawkins's proposal for waylaying the plate-fleet with a dozen men-of-war. Whether Burghley and the Queen were acquainted with the exact purpose is unknown, but it is quite likely that they were not. Hawkins and Winter were operating under a general permission, and Drake was one among many of the captains they employed. He had not yet distinguished himself above the ordinary run of these adventurers. The national situation was propitious to a daring stroke. Relations with Spain were at their worst. Her share in the Ridolfi plot was coming to light, Guerau de Spes was expelled at the close of the year, and early in 1572 the prospect of war continued. In the spring, when Drake was preparing for sea, the Beggars took Brille and Flushing, and volunteers from England were going over to aid the Dutch revolt.

On 24 May 1572, Drake left Plymouth with the *Pascha*, 70 tons, and the *Swan*, 25, and crews numbering seventy-three in all. With that handful he intended

to take Nombre de Dios, a town as large as Plymouth, gut the treasure-house, and sail away before the Spanish forces could get into motion. Both his ships are described as Plymouth vessels, and the larger was very probably the one whose name was otherwise rendered as the *Pasco*, belonging to John Hawkins. From prisoners taken in the previous year he had gathered exact particulars about the town and its defences. Before he sailed he had every detail of the plan thought out and the necessary equipment provided.

He made a quick run to the Caribbean, reaching Guadeloupe twenty-five days out from Plymouth. The island was not occupied by Spaniards, and he spent three days there watering and refreshing the crews. Then he sailed straight to Port Pheasant, his hidden harbour on the Darien coast, taking care not to approach the Main near enough to be seen on the way. He found that Port Pheasant was no longer his secret. An English ship commanded by John Garrett, another of Hawkins's officers, had been guided there by some of the men who had sailed with Drake in the previous year. Garrett had quitted the place five days before, and had left nailed to a tree a friendly warning to Drake, telling him that the Spaniards had been there and had dug up the buried stores. Drake had released his prisoners in 1571 with his customary humanity, and the betrayal of his port was the consequence. He did not let it disturb him. He was there to erect three pinnaces which he had brought in pieces from England, and he proceeded to do it, first building a stockade of logs on the shore as a precaution.

While the party was so occupied another English ship appeared with two Spanish prizes in company. She had likewise been piloted there by some of Drake's old hands. Her commander was James Ranse, yet another

of Hawkins's officers, but now in the service of Sir Edward Horsey, Captain of Carisbrooke and Governor of the Isle of Wight. During the previous two years Horsey had been in partnership with the Huguenots and Sea Beggars in the Channel and now, like others of the Queen's officials, was extending the enterprise to the West Indies. Ranse had thirty men, and Drake, whose numbers were not excessive, admitted him to a share in the attempt upon Nombre de Dios.

Having launched the pinnaces, the two captains sailed north-westwards up the coast towards Nombre de Dios until they reached the Isle of Pines, a convenient advanced base for the actual dash upon the treasure. Here they found some negroes, slaves of the Spaniards, cutting timber, and from them learned that Nombre de Dios had been attacked by the Cimaroons not long before and was in consequence to be reinforced by soldiers from Panama. It was not good news, for it showed that the town might be on the alert, even if the fresh troops had not arrived. Drake determined to press on without delay. He left Ranse in charge of the ships and himself led the pinnaces containing fifty-three of his own men and twenty of Ranse's. The use of the pinnaces enabled the working of a timed movement. With their oars they could approach their goal regardless of calms, and in the harbour they could manœuvre with a rapidity impossible to a ship under sail. By sunset on 28 July Drake, sailing and rowing close inshore, had arrived unperceived within two leagues of Nombre de Dios. He anchored and waited his time, then in silence rowed on to the last headland, beyond which the harbour would lie open. He meant to enter at dawn and had an hour or two in hand. He soon saw that it would not do to wait, for the men were beginning to mutter of what lay before

them. The moon rising at three o'clock was in its last quarter, but he made its light suffice and gave the word.

Nothing in Drake's career shows better the brilliance of his intellect than the manner in which he moved his forces in the darkness without mistake or confusion through the intricacies of a place which neither he nor any man with him had ever seen. It was the fruit of a year's pondering, foreseeing and rehearsing.

The pinnaces rounded the point and made for the selected landing-place, close to a battery on the edge of the town. Only one gunner was on duty, but there were six guns to be dismounted before the pinnaces could be safely left. The English threw them over the parapet into the sand, and Drake appointed twelve men as a boatguard and pressed on. Drums were already beating and the church bells ringing, but he would not enter the town without first making sure of a hill on the other side which, as he had learned, was also to be fortified. He found a battery constructed but not yet armed. Then with the larger part of his force he marched up the main street to the market-place, having detached John Drake and John Oxenham with a smaller body to make a circuit and enter from the other side. The majority of the inhabitants, as the Spanish accounts confess, were in a panic, but a few stout men gathered to make a stand at the south-east side of the market-place, near the Panama gate; and some old soldier among them found time to stretch a string from house to house and tie smouldering matches to it, simulating a line of musketeers ready to fire.

It was of no avail. Drake and his brother attacked from opposite directions and the defence broke down. The fugitives ran out of the Panama gate and left the town to the English. Time was now important, for the

Spaniards would inevitably rally under their skilled leaders, and their numbers were superior. Drake quickly led his people to the governor's house, where the treasure trains from Panama were unladen. A large chamber revealed a stack of silver bars, but no gold. The silver was too heavy for removal, and Drake tried next at the King's treasure-house. Before he could break in a tropical storm burst and rain fell in torrents. To have the bowstrings wet and the matches of the muskets drowned was to be avoided at all costs, and the English huddled under the shelter of a penthouse until the downpour ceased. The half-hour's delay destroyed the élan which the force had hitherto displayed. The men looked apprehensively for Spaniards to fall on them from behind while they strove to batter down the strong door of the treasure-house. Drake, completely self-possessed, saw that precaution was needful. He ordered his brother's party to enter the treasure-house while he returned to the market-place to cover the operation. But at the first step he collapsed, having lost a great quantity of blood from a wound in the leg which, unknown to any, he had received in the first encounter.

His fall ended the whole attempt. Some men were panicky, others still bold. But even these latter swore that they must carry their captain to safety before searching for treasure. He had recovered consciousness but had no strength to resist, and all returned to the pinnaces. They embarked as day was breaking and pulled out of range. As some solace they captured a Spanish ship lying in the port, and with her and her cargo of Canary wines they withdrew to an island outside the bay, about a league from the town.

The surprise of Nombre de Dios, devised during long months to the last detail, had succeeded and failed.

And for the rest of Drake's life it is noticeable that he was less inclined to make careful plans and more disposed to rely upon the inspiration of the time and place of action. Careful planning was Hawkins's method, and Hawkins had been Drake's trainer. The younger man now emerged from his tutelage and followed the bent of his own nature. Thenceforward Drake and Hawkins represent two different schools of leadership.

Miss I. A. Wright, with her unrivalled knowledge of the Spanish routine and administration, raises a question on this affair. A treasure-fleet had already left Nombre de Dios, and the next was not looked for until after the lapse of several months. That being so, it was contrary to the usual procedure for Nombre de Dios to contain any treasure worth fighting for: the valuables were accumulated at Panama until the *galeones* were at hand. Is it possible that Drake was deceived, and that even the silver was a figment of heated imagination? It is hard to decide. The probability is against the treasure, and yet it seems equally improbable that Drake, with all his exact information about the place, had been misled on the most vital circumstance of all.

Drake retired to the fastnesses of the Darien coast and determined to try the alternative plan of attacking a treasure-train on the road between Panama and Nombre de Dios. To this end he opened communication with the Cimaroons, whose guidance would be essential. They told him that no treasure was moved across the Isthmus during the rainy season which was then setting in, and thus a delay of several months was inevitable. He filled in the time with raids in the pinnacles along the Main to Cartagena, and beyond it eastwards to Santa Marta. In this sort of warfare Drake's audacity and quick decisions were of supreme value in

keeping up the spirits of his force; in the tightest corners he could do nothing wrong. Yet his tiny force diminished. His brother John was killed while boarding a Spanish ship. Fever broke out and carried off his brother Joseph and many others. He had already been obliged to scuttle the *Swan* for lack of hands. He inflicted great damage on the coastal trade, keeping all valuable booty, but always releasing his prisoners and generally their ships. Of the latter he captured some twice and even three times.

At length, at the close of January 1573, the Cima-rooms reported that the treasure was beginning to move. With Oxenham and eighteen Englishmen and a score of negroes Drake marched across the Isthmus, ascending a great tree by the way and taking his famous view of the Pacific Ocean. Not far from Panama he laid an ambush on the road by which the mule-trains passed. Here, for the second time, luck was against him. All Spaniards on this road were on the alert, for the Cima-rooms were continually attacking them. A horseman passed through the lurking ambuscade and was alarmed by a suspicious movement. He met the oncoming convoy and gave warning that something was wrong. The Spaniards held back the treasure and sent forward a string of mules bearing victuals. Drake's men sprang joyfully upon them and captured nothing of value. On the way back to his shipping he sacked the town of Venta Cruces, but the great stroke had failed.

For the third time he tried, after joining forces with a crew of Frenchmen under Guillaume Le Testu, a Huguenot captain who gave him the latest news from Paris—of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. On this occasion the attack was made so close to Nombre de Dios that the ambushed English could hear the

hammers of the shipwrights working on the plate-fleet, which had now arrived in the harbour. The stroke was a brilliant success, marred only by the loss of *Le Testu* who had to be left, badly wounded, on the scene of action. A quantity of treasure fell to the raiders, so much of it that they could not carry all away. They de-camped with speed, for in an hour or two the man-power of *Nombre de Dios* and the *galeones* would be on their heels. After a further narrow escape, caused by a storm driving away the pinnaces from the appointed rendez-vous, Drake regained his shipping and sailed for home. The Spaniards from the harbour recovered some of the treasure and killed the unhappy French captain, whom they found lying on the ground. A comrade who had stood by him escaped and rejoined the English. Another French straggler, overburdened with plunder, was captured, and, as a Spanish despatch briefly notes, 'was torn into quarters'.

The value of Drake's booty is ascertainable for the first time from the recently published Spanish documents. They indicate that the whole of the treasure seized was worth 150,000 *pesos*, and that of this the raiders carried off from 80,000 to 100,000 *pesos* of gold. The gold *peso* was equivalent to nine English shillings of the period.¹ Thus the capture amounted to approximately £40,000, which was equally shared between the English and the French. In addition, Drake had taken an unknown but minor quantity of treasure whilst preying on the coastal commerce during the previous months.

When Drake reached Plymouth in August 1573, his difficulties were not at an end. The war-scare of eighteen months before had blown over, and negotia-

¹ For this evaluation see the author's *Sir John Hawkins*, p. 180.

tions were in progress with Spain for resumption of trade and adjustment of damages. His public appearance in England would have entailed the casting of all his plunder into the debit side of the balance. Thus he was at once warned to make himself scarce, and he disappeared from Plymouth with ship and gold until the English and Spanish governments should have finished their haggling. Probably he went to the Irish coast, but nothing is certainly known save that he was in Ireland two years afterwards. The Spaniards of course complained of his depredations, but received no redress. Equally John Hawkins received none for the losses at San Juan de Ulua.

Drake was by no means the only English captain raiding the Caribbean in these years. In June 1574 John Noble visited the Central American coast with a crew of twenty-eight. His career was short, for he was captured near Veragua by a force sent out from that port. The Spaniards killed all his people except two boys who were sent to the galleys for life. Their report concludes: 'The captain and two others were hanged at Nombre de Dios, which has occasioned great joy and animated all, and the realm is entirely quiet'.¹

Of another venture of 1574-75 we know more, since its details have been preserved in the records of the High Court of Admiralty.² In November 1574 Gilbert Horsey sailed from Plymouth with twenty-five men in an 18-ton vessel named the *John* belonging to John Tipkin, a London man. With thirteen little guns, the largest a three-pounder and most of them little more than small-arms throwing half-pound shot, he sought his fortune in that same alluring angle between Carta-

¹ Wright, *Documents etc.* 1569-80, p. 93.

² H.C.A., Oyer and Terminer, 1/39, Oct. and Nov., 1575.

gena and Honduras which had been the scene of Drake's exploits. On the way out he took a Spanish ship of 50 tons off the Barbary coast. She was laden with salt fish and was presumably retained as a victualler, for she was taken across the Atlantic with a prize crew of eight on board. Horseley made his landfall at the Cabeças, east of Nombre de Dios. He had some communication with the Cimaroons but appears not to have utilised their services, since he made all his captures by sea. It should be noted, however, that a lucrative trade was possible with the Cimaroons, for, as Drake had learned, they captured treasure-trains on their own account and set very little store by the gold and silver.¹ A Spanish document speaks of Englishmen bringing linens and other manufactures to barter with them. Off the Cabeças Horseley suffered a reverse. A well-armed Spanish ship recaptured the prize and the Englishmen in her, and thus the expedition was reduced to seventeen men. With these he attacked the coastwise shipping and obtained treasure which may have amounted to about £2000 in all, while a Spanish account says that he landed in Veragua and captured a rich man who had to pay 3000 *pesos* in ransom. Undoubtedly this very inexpensive expedition made a handsome profit. Coming home to Plymouth and finding that peace with Spain was still the government's policy, Horseley bribed the Admiralty officer, sent word to Tipkin in London, and passed on up Channel to Arundel, a quiet spot where the treasure could be unobtrusively landed.

Mere accident has preserved the record of this voyage, and there were many others of the same sort

¹ The Cimaroon chiefs told Drake that they had quantities of treasure concealed in the river beds, but that as the rivers were high in the rainy season they could not get it up for his benefit (*Sir Francis Drake Reviv'd*, pp. 32-3).

of which no details survive. Spanish representatives in England asserted that ships were continually sailing for the Caribbean, and in particular accused John Hawkins of equipping many of them.

The last of these coastal raids of which testimony exists was that led by Andrew Barker in 1576. Barker was a Bristol merchant who, on the resumption of Anglo-Spanish trade, had sent a ship and cargo to the Canary Islands. Although personally absent, Barker was accused of heresy by the Inquisition, and all his goods to the value of £1700 were confiscated. This is his own version of the facts, stated in his complaint to the Admiralty Court. There is no reason for disbelieving it, since the Inquisition at Seville had acted in a similar manner towards John Frampton several years before, and the branch in the Canaries had been notorious for its rapacity in the previous decade.

Failing to secure redress, Barker sailed to seek his remedy in the Caribbean in 1576. With two ships, the *Ragged Staff* and the *Bear*, he worked along the Main from Trinidad westwards and took a number of small vessels of moderate value. Near Nombre de Dios he looked for the Cimaroons, but failed to find them. Then he captured a Spanish frigate and made her his flagship, the *Ragged Staff* having become so leaky that she had to be abandoned. Barker was ruined by dissensions and mutiny. Near Truxillo the opposing faction set him and his friends on shore. While he was negotiating for reinstatement the Spaniards surprised him and carried his head to Truxillo as a trophy. The mutineers sailed for England with the booty, but before they were clear of the Caribbean the frigate was capsized in a squall and went to the bottom with all the valuables. Thereupon the survivors turned back to the golden coast and put in

another season seeking for more. They lost a skiff and seven men taken by a Spanish ship, and it was only a remnant of the original expedition that reached Plymouth in 1578. The leaders were imprisoned for their conduct to Barker.

Miss Wright's documents amplify and in the main corroborate the story derived from older evidence. Hakluyt remarks that nothing was known in England concerning the fate of the men captured in the skiff; and one of the newly revealed Spanish witnesses supplies the deficiency: 'They died like Christians on the gallows at Puerto de Caballos'.¹

¹ Wright, *op. cit.* p. lviii.

CHAPTER VIII

JOHN OXENHAM

UNTIL recently a very meagre account of John Oxenham's expedition was available. It was from a manuscript found in the possession of one Lopez Vaz, captured by the English in 1586, and translated and published by Hakluyt. To this was added a romantic yarn picked up by Richard Hawkins while a prisoner in Peru, to the effect that Oxenham was brought to ruin by his love for a Spanish lady who was one of his captives. Kingsley embodied this with a good deal of pure fiction in his *Westward Ho!*, and it is from that book that the only flesh-and-blood conception of Oxenham has hitherto been obtainable. Kingsley's portrait is rather at variance with the facts as they are revealed by the newly published reports of Spanish eye-witnesses. In depicting Oxenham and other notable men such as Grenville and the Hawkinses he drew upon his imagination and not upon historical testimony. The heroes of *Westward Ho!* are in fact not Elizabethans but mid-Victorians, 'muscular Christians' for the most part, of Kingsley's own type and acquaintance. Their ethics and the texture of their thoughts belong to the England of the Crimean War. It seems necessary to insert this warning to the general reader that Kingsley was a novelist, because most of us have been so enthralled by his writings as to accept them for history. 'The True and Tragical History of Mr. John Oxenham', perhaps

the greatest chapter in that great book *Westward Ho!*, is indeed a tale 'at which both the ears of him that heareth it shall tingle'; the same, as given in the reports of Spaniards on the spot, relates a like story of almost incredible heroism and endurance with the additional interest that it shows the undertaking to have been one that came near to changing the major course of colonial history—a might-have-been, pregnant with tremendous consequences, the Gallipoli campaign of the sixteenth-century wars.

Drake in 1572 had learned the position of affairs in the Isthmus of Panama. The Spaniards held only Panama itself and Nombre de Dios, and a wayside station between them. They were short of men and could find only just sufficient troops to convoy the mule-trains and furnish small guards for their two ports. A field-force of two or three hundred was the utmost they could hope to turn out for a campaign. The Cimaroons were more numerous and were incensed against them. These negroes were not altogether savages. They obeyed their chiefs and practised an effective discipline. They were cleanly and their settlements were well kept. One or two such settlements were more than villages; Ronconcholon was a place of 217 houses with a considerable population. They had left far in their dim past the horrible religions of the African coast and had accepted the elements of Christianity from the Spaniards whom they hated. But theirs was a Christianity without priests, and Drake had seen that they could as easily be made Protestants as Catholics; he had personally made a beginning of converting them, and the Spaniards asserted that he took home with him two of his allies for further instruction. The strength of the Cimaroons was in Vallano, south and east of the Panama-Nombre

route, where the Isthmus nears its junction with the South American continent. There, in a great wilderness of which the exact topography was known only to themselves, they had defied and defeated sporadic efforts to subdue them.

Drake and Oxenham had seen the Pacific from the tall tree near Panama and had made their vow that one day they would sail its waters, for on them passed the unarmed ships that brought fabulous wealth from Peru. Whether Drake at this time had the Straits of Magellan in his mind we do not know. The obvious plan for men viewing the South Sea from the Isthmus was to cross from the north and build their own craft on the Pacific shore; any makeshift would suffice for the first surprise. Equally obvious was it that a strong English party, allied with the negroes, would have no need to make a hurried retreat. Having used the Isthmus, why should they give it up? The strength of Panama was measurable and weak. A moderate force of enemies might defy it. A Spanish officer estimated that three hundred Englishmen would have been enough to hold the Isthmus permanently. We may perhaps reduce it to two hundred with a Drake to handle them. John Oxenham tried it with fifty.

On 9 April 1576¹ he sailed from Plymouth with a ship of 100 tons, a smaller vessel, and two pinnaces carried in pieces for erection on the scene of action. He had with him fifty-seven men, of whom seven were dead before he landed on the Isthmus. Among his companions was John Butler, known to the Spaniards as Chalona. The Spanish reports make this man more important and formidable than Oxenham himself. He had a great knowledge of Central America, was fluent in

¹ Not 1575, as has always been stated on the authority of Lopez Vaz.

many languages, and is described as the pilot of the expedition. Henry Butler, his brother, was also present. Another prominent person was named by the Spaniards Peter or Jacome Canoa, described as a tall, fair man, thirty years of age. We cannot tell what his English name was; if Chalona could be equivalent to Butler it is idle to guess at the identity of Canoa. He is referred to as a leader and a man of rank. John Butler was possibly identical with 'The Irishman named Captain John' reported by a Spanish agent in England in February 1576 as having returned after fifteen years in the Indies and as being then engaged in fitting out an expedition thither.¹ Oxenham himself was a Plymouth man, aged forty-two, 'a man of grave demeanour, much feared and respected and obeyed by his soldiers'. To the Spaniards he declared that the ships were his own and that he sailed without the licence or knowledge of the Queen. This was probably true, for in the first half of 1576 the English government was still pursuing a policy of peace with Spain and seeking to mediate for a settlement of the Dutch revolt. We must then regard the expedition as a private venture inspired by the first-hand knowledge of Oxenham and Butler and perhaps financed by the winnings of the raid of 1572. The leaders hoped, as will be seen, to make a preliminary haul of treasure and with it to enlarge their forces and proceed to greater things. Oxenham confessed that he had had many discussions with Drake, but there is no evidence that Drake had a finger in this voyage.

When Oxenham reached the coast about midsummer 1576 the rainy season must have been setting in and immediate land operations impracticable. He took some

¹ Miss Wright makes this suggestion, p. xlix. Her reference is in *Spanish Calendar*, II, p. 526.

treasure from the local shipping and made an unsuccessful attempt on Veragua. He then went eastwards to the Gulf of Acla and concealed the ships at an unknown spot, together with a Spanish prize, set up the pinnaces, and got into touch with the Cimaroons. In September he came to their town of Ronconcholon, leaving a few men to guard the ships.

It was fortunate for Spain that she had at Panama an officer possessed of more vigour and initiative than was commonly displayed in her colonial service. This man was Gabriel de Loarte, President of the Audiencia. As soon as he heard of Oxenham's proceedings on the north coast he expected an alliance with the Cimaroons to be the next step, and even divined that an incursion into the Pacific might follow. While Oxenham was at Ronconcholon, Loarte sent a vessel to reconnoitre the river mouths of the south coast, and this vessel returned with a negative report. At the same time he had a force sent out from Nombre de Dios along the north coast. These people scored a success of serious import to Oxenham. They discovered some of his shipping, chased the skeleton crews ashore, and captured the greater part of the artillery, munitions and trade goods of the English.

Oxenham was thus left in Vallano, with most of his men it is true, but with only his small-arms and a scanty supply of ammunition, and without means of paying the Cimaroons for their services. One ship had so far escaped detection, and he seems to have sent a party to bring away her iron-work and cordage and burn her. He would thus have the means of constructing a new vessel when required. The loss of the linens and other goods put him at a disadvantage with the Cimaroons. Their price for helping him now was that all negro slaves taken were to be given to them, and all Spaniards killed.

Oxenham agreed, although he had no intention of killing his prisoners. During the last weeks of the year he built a pinnace forty-five feet long, pulling twelve oars a side, and launched her on a river flowing to the South Sea, probably the Chucunaque; and then with his Englishmen and a party of Cimaroons he rowed down to the Bay of San Miguel and on to the Islands of Pearls in the Gulf of Panama.

It was in February 1577 that the raiders reached the Pearl Islands. They found a handful of Spaniards and some negroes engaged in the pearl fishery, and a Franciscan friar who had just come to confess the slaves. A companion of the friar afterwards made a remarkable deposition on what took place. Its details bear the stamp of truth and reveal in vivid terms the deep incompatibility between Catholic and Protestant which produced a century of bloodshed. The English took from the deponent certain religious books and papal bulls, which they destroyed, calling the Pope by a foul name. They smashed up images and a consecrated altar, Oxenham asking the Spaniard why he had so many gods, and telling him not to believe in saints and friars who were sinners like other men. Then:

'Having found a child's lesson-book, one of the English named Chalona, who is the interpreter among them, stopped to read it, and reading the ten commandments, when he came to the commandment: *Thou shalt not steal*, he laughed loudly at it, and said that all goods were common property. . . . So also, among other books deponent possessed, they found one of the evangels and epistles in Spanish; and they bade him read that book, because it was a good book, and ordered him to treat it well, inasmuch as the others were fabrications and all lies; and deponent took the book and put it away.

'Next the English opened deponent's chests to take his clothing and what else they might find; and having found a crucifix in a box, their captain looked deponent in the face wrathfully and holding up the crucifix in his hands demanded: Why hast thou this? And threw it at deponent, but missed him, and it struck a stand, which broke the crucifix to pieces. . . .

'The English cook took the alb used in the ceremony of the mass and put it on and danced about in it, ridiculing everything; which performance the *cimarrones* witnessed. It delighted them and they gave great evidence of their pleasure, saying, "I English, pure Lutheran." Afterwards the said Englishman cut the alb short and kept it on for a shirt and wore his own clothes over it. . . .

'All the Englishmen took the friar and buffeted him and put a chamber-pot upon his head and struck him many blows upon the head. The friar was humble, exclaiming: So be it, for the love of God. . . . The next day they showed the friar a wooden cross which was there and asked him what it was; and when the friar answered that it was the image and likeness of the cross upon which Jesus Christ Our Lord was crucified, the English replied: That is where we will hang you and burn you before we go. To which the friar answered that he did not merit so much honour; and at this they left him'.¹

So behaved John Oxenham and his merry crew in the exuberance of new-found liberty, while the friar answered them out of the old tradition and undoubtedly won on points. But it must be said that this display was not typical of the English. Drake and Hawkins would have none of it, and there is no such record in the Spanish reports against any other English leader, although

¹ Deposition of Diego de Sotomayor, in Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-21.

the French were often charged with blasphemies to which they added wanton bloodshed. We are left to wonder whether Oxenham was a rabid hot-gospeller or whether he carried out the performance to impress the Cimaroons. Politics demanded that any Catholic faith they still possessed should be eradicated; and besides there was that awkward promise to kill all Spaniards, which might be passed off in ribald horseplay.

From other witnesses we have an inkling of Oxenham's further plans. He said that the English Queen would reward him highly for opening the way to the Pacific, and that next year he would come again 'to settle with 2000 men and make himself master of all this realm'. Another Englishman said to Sotomayor's wife: 'Look here, madame. This year every Spaniard is to pay. Say not a word—this is nothing compared to what is coming. Now we have come only to open the way. Presently you will see great things.'

Meanwhile treasure was his object. The ships that brought it from Peru were easy game, for on that peaceful coast their crews were unarmed, not even carrying muskets or swords; and in the calms of the Gulf of Panama they could easily be boarded from a rowing craft. Near the Pearl Islands the English took a vessel from Guayaquil with 60,000 *pesos* in gold, but missed another containing 1,300,000 *pesos*. Lopez Vaz adds that they also captured 100,000 *pesos* in silver from a Lima ship and subsequently were much hindered by its transportation. However, could Oxenham have got away with the gold alone, he would have done better than Drake in '72. During twenty days at the Pearl Islands his presence was unknown at Panama. But he had released his prisoners in the usual English fashion, and two of them found an undamaged canoe in which

they carried the news to Panama on 6 March. He himself was in no haste to retreat, and even cruised to within sight of Panama; but it had been warned on the previous day, and a surprise was impossible. He then went back to the Pearl Islands to intercept more prizes.

At Panama Gabriel de Loarte and his Audiencia rose to the occasion. They had expected nothing less. Andrew Barker was then operating on the north coast, and there were reports that the whole Caribbean was alive with corsairs. Two Cimaroons captured before Oxenham appeared had confessed under torture that they were expecting the English to come that year and cross to the Pacific.¹ On the map the Spanish empire appears so massive that we have difficulty in imagining what its officers knew to be the truth—that its occupation was so tenuous as to resemble the skin of a soap-bubble. It has been computed that at this date there were not many more than 150,000 men, women and children of European blood in the whole extent of the colonies. In effect they were hardly yet true colonies. The majority of the Spaniards in them were engaged in the treasure business and a small minority in the conversion of the natives. Loarte realised that a crisis had arisen. If the English in the Isthmus could not be expelled without delay they might never be, and the neck of the feeble giant would be severed. Loarte had 500 men of military age at Panama, but not all could be spared for field service. Within six days he had 200 of them afloat in six vessels commanded by Pedro de Ortega Valencia, and another force getting ready on the north coast at Nombre de Dios. He also sent word

¹ Had Drake discussed this plan with them, or had Horseley? Loarte alludes to a warning he had received from Spain that the attempt would be made.

at once to the Viceroy of Peru that help was needed. He did not wait for orders to expend government money. 'This', he wrote with a defiance of routine that was then unusual, 'was an occasion when to await a reply might have entailed irreparable damage'.

Oxenham underestimated the energy of the Spaniards. He retired in leisurely fashion into Vallano without taking pains to conceal his trail or guard against pursuit. Pedro de Ortega followed by the river (the Chucunaque?) and thence by hard marching overland. He surprised most of the English and their allies at breakfast, killed several, and took two or three prisoners.¹ Oxenham was not present, since he was engaged in transporting the treasure at a village a few miles away. Next day Ortega fell upon his party also and routed them. Oxenham escaped with two shot-wounds and about twenty men with him. Ortega then tortured a captured English boy and made him reveal the treasure, which was all recovered. By the same means he located the two pinnacles left sunk in a creek near Acla, and sent an officer to take them and some treasure buried near.

This captain, Luis Garcia de Melo, achieved his mission and then struck inland from the north with sixty men. He burned the negro town of Ronconcholon and came out on the south coast. Not all of the English had been dealt with by Ortega, and the position was that Oxenham, Butler and Canoa had joined forces, with about thirty men under their command. But, with shipping and treasure lost and prestige destroyed, they were in a tight place. Ortega and Melo were satisfied that the Cimaroons might be trusted to turn against them. The two captains called off their campaign and returned

¹ The Spanish reports say not a word about the lady of whom Richard Hawkins was told twenty years afterwards. It is unlikely that she existed.

to Panama in April 1577. Loarte also thought that enough had now been done. He began to regret that he had appealed for aid to the rival jurisdiction of Peru, and sent word that the Peruvian forces were not needed.

The message met the Peruvian Spaniards on their way up the coast. Their leader, Diego de Frias Trejo, decided to continue on his mission, since the English leaders were still at large and the Cimaroons inadequately punished. Frias began his campaign with ample forces in August 1577. With four columns, in spite of the rains, he scoured Vallano until the following February. One party came upon Oxenham with a handful of Englishmen. Oxenham defended himself until a Spanish officer covered him with an arquebus, when he surrendered with nine men. Next Butler was rounded up with four more. 'He it is', reported Frias, 'who brought the English to this country'. Heavy punishment was meted out to the Cimaroons, who, in spite of anticipations, seem to have been reasonably faithful to the English. But all the efforts of the Spaniards failed to capture Peter Canoa, who reached the north coast with about twelve men. Pursuers found splinters and trimmings where the fugitives had constructed a boat. The Cimaroons admitted that they had got to sea, but asserted that all had been drowned. It was not true. Gradually it came out that these desperadoes did escape. With their canoe they captured a coasting vessel at Tolu and sailed for England. Whether they ever reached home is another matter. In records originating from the English side there is not a hint of them, but neither is there of John Oxenham's whole venture from start to finish. Our last witnesses are the Cimaroons, who bade farewell to Canoa on the Acla shore and received his promise that one day he would return. In 1580 they

were still expecting him and looking out to sea for the black flag which he was to show as a token.

Eighteen Englishmen were taken prisoners to Panama. The common men were hanged there forthwith. Two boys previously taken were spared and sent to Spain. Oxenham, John Butler, Henry Butler (a youth) and the ship's master, described as 'Thomas 'Xervel', were sent to Lima to be judged by the Viceroy of Peru. The Inquisition dealt with them first. All abjured heresy and were admitted to the Catholic Church and sentenced to penitential service in the galleys. Then the civil power took them, and Oxenham, the elder Butler and the shipmaster were hanged in October 1580. Henry Butler was sent to the galleys for life. Spain may have been just, but she was not so generous as these corsairs who could not kill prisoners even when to do so would have ensured escape.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROJECT OF CATHAY AND THE SOUTH SEA

THE expansion set on foot by the Duke of Northumberland had from the outset worked in two directions, by the north towards Russia and Central Asia, with the Far East as the ultimate goal, and by the south to Barbary and the Gold Coast, and thence under Hawkins to the Caribbean. The success of the Muscovy Company had engendered a certain complacency discouraging to further effort, and in the sixties we have seen Gilbert and Jenkinson urging in vain that the Company should extend its discoveries by the North West and the North East. The enterprise of Hawkins had broken down into irregular warfare, of which Oxenham's invasion of the Isthmus was the culminating stroke. But while Drake and Barker and Oxenham were playing their desperate game, other men in England were reviving schemes of long-range discovery based on scientific knowledge and directed to the peaceful acquisition of wealth. The decade of the seventies was a period not only of bold action, as we have seen in the foregoing chapters, but of bold thinking and generous planning; and at its close Drake was to come forward and combine all aims and all motives in the voyage of circumnavigation, a venture which becomes ever more astonishing as we learn more about it.

Since the beginning of the century the great East

Indian carracks of the Portuguese had brought the wares of tropical Asia to Lisbon by the Cape of Good Hope. Other nations had been envious, but none had established any regular trade in competition with them. Spain had looked like doing so when Magellan opened for her the South West Passage through his strait. Charles V had challenged the Portuguese claim that the Moluccas or Spice Islands lay in the Portuguese hemisphere as partitioned by the Pope and the Treaty of Tordesillas. But the difficulty of recrossing the Pacific from Asia to America was too great to permit of a Spanish spice trade, and Charles sold his claim to the Portuguese in 1529. He retained, however, his right to the Philippines which Magellan had discovered, although it was not until 1565 that Andres de Urdaneta solved the problem of the Pacific winds and sailed a ship back from the Philippines to Mexico. Only then did Spanish trade with the Far East become feasible. Manila was used as a depot to which Chinese merchants brought their cargoes, and annual galleons crossed between that port and Acapulco in New Spain. The French made one incursion into Asiatic waters when two brothers named Parmentier sailed out by the Cape of Good Hope in 1529, but it proved to be an isolated effort. The English had never yet succeeded in getting a ship to the East, although they had made various essays by the supposed northern passages. The subject was one which haunted the minds of Englishmen, and it is not easy to explain why they refrained from following the Portuguese route by the Cape. When we recall the English doctrine of effective occupation, and the intrusions in Guinea which it was held to justify, we have to admit that consideration for Portugal was not the deterrent. The avoidance of the Cape route must have been

due to another cause. Measured on the globe it was the longest way to the Far East, and the alternative passages had the advantage of covering little more than half the distance. So, in spite of the fact that they had yet to be discovered, they seemed more attractive than the known difficulties of the Cape.

In the 1570's, however, another great possibility came into prominence, altogether distinct from trade with the Asia known to the Portuguese. Geographers had long been convinced that in the Pacific south of the equator there were many islands and vast continental lands. From classical antiquity the idea of a southern continent had been mooted. Medieval Europe had held it to be of no practical interest, owing to the supposed impossibility of human beings surviving to traverse the blazing heat of the tropic zone. The Church had condemned belief in the antipodes,¹ not from any notion that the earth was flat, but because scripture declared all men to be the sons of Adam; there could be no antipodean beings of human stock. The seamen of the Renaissance exploded the fable of the tropical heat, and gradually the project of the south took shape.

The texts of Marco Polo available to Renaissance readers contained a stimulating contribution to it. Away to the south-east of Asia, they declared, were rich countries so remote as to be generally unknown—the kingdom of Lochac containing gold and dyewoods, the island of Pentam abounding in aromatic drugs, and the land of Malaiur producing spices in profusion. In fact Marco Polo had been misrepresented by his transcribers, and was speaking of Malaya and the adjacent islands; but the error was not penetrated by Renaissance scholarship, which accepted the passage as testimony to

¹ *Antipodes* in this connection signified men, not regions.

a great unknown. With it were coupled the biblical accounts of Solomon's Land of Ophir, from which his fleets drew vast riches. Spaniards in particular speculated about Ophir and were convinced that it lay in the South Pacific, perhaps identical with, perhaps adjacent to, the golden land of Lochac.

Magellan passed through his straits in 1520, and to the south saw the land which he named Tierra del Fuego. For all he could tell it was a moderate-sized island, but the geographers with their preconception of a continent enlarged it. In the 1530's the French school of cartographers were producing world-maps with a great continent drawn in approximately the position of Australia and New Zealand. In 1541 the Fleming Mercator made a globe in which this French Australia and Magellan's Tierra del Fuego were linked up to form a huge land-mass covering the whole southern cap of the earth and projecting northwards into the tropics at the place where Lochac was supposed to lie. Mercator produced further maps and globes of the same pattern, and so also did his contemporary Abraham Ortelius. In 1570 Ortelius published an atlas which became a standard work in England. Its world-map displays the southern continent complete, its coast running in a long diagonal across the Pacific from the straits of Magellan north-westwards to the vicinity of New Guinea, with the names Lochac, Pentam and Malaiur inscribed, and the legend: 'Some name this Southern continent Magellanica from its discoverer'—although most of the discovery had been made in an arm-chair and very little in Magellan's trusty ship.

The southern continent of Mercator and Ortelius did not escape the notice of active minds in England, and the lands of Lochac and Ophir began to enter into the

calculations of projectors. Very appositely there came to hand the news of a Spanish discovery in the unknown Pacific. In 1567 Alvaro de Mendaña and Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa sailed from Peru, and after a long westward passage found a group of large islands a few degrees south of the equator. These islands they identified with Ophir, and on their return described them as King Solomon's Islands. There was actually no gold in them, but Mendaña thought he saw indications of it and was convinced that he had made an important discovery. Further, he believed that the mainland of Terra Australis lay not far distant and that the islands would serve as an advanced base for its exploration and conquest. He regarded himself as a new Columbus who had discovered a Pacific Antilles leading to the exploitation of a continent as great as America. Predisposed no doubt by the writings of Marco Polo and the speculations of the geographers, he imagined that the Solomon islanders were trying to tell him that the people of the continent were rich and civilised. The trade winds forbade return to Peru in the latitude of the outward passage. He therefore sailed far northwards and made the homeward voyage in the belt of westerly winds discovered by Urdaneta. This took him to a landfall in California, whence he coasted down to Mexico and ultimately to Peru. But on the Mexican coast a number of his men left the ships and travelled inland, and the Viceroy also sent an officer to obtain from him an account of the voyage.

By this means the discovery of the Solomon Islands became known in Mexico. There were in that country a number of English merchants trading under proper licence from the authorities, not working direct from England in the manner of Hawkins, but transmitting

their goods in the annual *flotas* from Seville. One of these men, Henry Hawks, came to England in 1572 with the news of Mendaña's discovery. His account, printed in Hakluyt's collection, was brief and inaccurate, but he was by no means the only possible channel of information, and it is evident from the transactions which ensued that the English formed a high opinion of the importance of Mendaña's exploit.

An adventure to the south of the equator had long been canvassed in England. In 1570 Guerau de Spes had reported that some of the Queen's councillors were considering the planting of a settlement in 'the Kingdom of Magellanes' as a base of approach to the South Sea and the coast of Peru, and that, he added, was not the first time the thing had been discussed. By 1573-74 the stimulus of Mendaña's discovery had expanded the idea into a matured plan of empire-building. The phrase 'British Empire' was first coined in this decade by John Dee who, as a Welshman by descent, preferred it to the 'English Empire' which would have been more obvious to most of his contemporaries.

The leader in the project for a British Empire of the South was Richard Grenville,¹ with whom were associated William Hawkins, the Plymouth shipowner, and a number of gentlemen of Cornwall and Devon. Early in 1574 they asked sanction for an effort to achieve 'the discovery, traffic and enjoying for the Queen's Majesty and her subjects of all or any lands, islands and countries southwards beyond the equinoctial, or where the Pole Antarctic hath any elevation above the horizon', provided, of course, that such lands were not already subject to any Christian prince. Their further particulars show without doubt that the region in view was the

¹ Not knighted until 1577.

Terra Australis or Magellanic continent of Mercator and Ortelius, embodying the Lochac and Ophir on which Dee was writing secret memoranda and talking confidentially to the Queen and the ruling circle of England. The unknown continent, they said, might be approached by the Straits of Magellan or by prolonging the Portuguese route round the Cape of Good Hope, but their own preference was for the Straits. The enterprise would yield results to England comparable with the benefits derived by Portugal and Spain from the East and the West—increase of shipping, sale of manufactures, work for the unemployed, discovery of gold, silver and pearls, and propagation of the gospel. In sum the projectors were setting forth the complete programme of a colonial empire.¹

In answer to their request a patent was drafted empowering them to discover new lands 'having the pole antarctic elevate', and also to proceed to commerce with the territories of the Khan of Cathay. There is no evidence in English records that the draft patent was completed and issued, but from a different source we hear more of it. In 1579 John Oxenham and John Butler were prisoners at Lima, and the authorities questioned them on the subject. Butler said that Grenville had asked for a licence to settle 'on the River Plate towards

¹ Some of the documents on which this account is based have long been known, others are of comparatively recent discovery. The project has never been accorded its place in the standard histories of the period for two principal reasons: (1) that the geographical concepts on which it was based were generally overlooked by historians until Prof. E. G. R. Taylor synthetised them in her *Tudor Geography*; (2) that it receives hardly a mention in Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* and other writings. Hakluyt was a propagandist for the colonisation of North America, and the southern plan made no appeal to him. The wealth of his collections has made modern writers apt to assume that they are exhaustive of all important topics, which is by no means true.

the Strait of Magellan', but that as the Queen would not grant the licence he sold the ships which he had acquired for the purpose. Butler either knew little or concealed much. Oxenham, separately confined and separately examined, revealed a good deal more. Grenville, he alleged, asked for licence to pass through the Straits into the South Sea and there to seek lands and islands in which to found settlements for the surplus population of England. The Queen granted Grenville a comprehensive licence, which he showed to Oxenham when seeking to enlist him in the enterprise. Grenville had two ships and was about to buy more when the Queen revoked the licence for fear of hostilities with the Spanish colonies beyond the Straits of Magellan. Further,—and this is very interesting—Oxenham said that he had often talked with Francis Drake on the matter, and that Drake had said that if the Queen would give leave he would come through the straits and found settlements in some good country. The unlucky captive was not told that at that very moment Drake was raiding the Peruvian coast and prompting the Lima officials to interrogate their prisoners on South Sea designs.

Whether the patent was actually issued—what Oxenham saw may have been only the draft—is not of great importance, for the evidence leaves no doubt that the government first approved and afterwards vetoed the project. The fear that it might lead to hostilities was well grounded. Grenville was essentially a fighting man and not too careful of the law, and the sentiment of Devon in general was by this time completely anti-Spanish. Once in the South Sea the combination would certainly have attacked the treasure route in preference to planting colonies, and in 1574 that was a proceeding which

would not have suited the Queen's policy. We do not know exactly what information she and Burghley possessed about Spanish interests in Chile and Peru. Statesmen were often badly informed on distant parts of the world. We may imagine that at first sight the project appeared to offer the prospect of a legitimate enterprise, but that on further enquiry its dangers were discerned; for all hopes were then centred on the attainment of a stable peace by the solution of the Netherlands problem.

Meanwhile a different plan of expansion was growing prominent. In the previous decade the Muscovy Company had quashed the demands of Gilbert and Jenkinson for further exploration in the North, but in the seventies this dog-in-the-manger attitude could no longer be maintained. Jenkinson, it is true, had grown too old for active leadership, and Gilbert was fighting in the Netherland and Irish wars. But new men were taking up the campaign. Michael Lok, brother of the John Lok who had led the Guinea expedition of 1554, was a merchant with long experience of the Levant. As had happened with Chancellor and Jenkinson, the piratical anarchy of the Levant had disillusioned him of the prospects of decent commerce in those waters, and had set his mind on some better means of contact with Asia. For years he had been studying the problem of the North West and had accumulated, as he tells us, 'a ream of notes' on the subject. He came home from his travels and took up a London appointment in the management of the Muscovy Company, whose charter made its possessors the obvious promoters of a north-western discovery.

Martin Frobisher was also thinking on the same lines, possibly because he had served in Ireland and had

become acquainted with Sir Humphrey Gilbert.¹ He secured the patronage of the Earl of Warwick, and approached the Muscovy Company in 1574 with a request that they should permit him to make the attempt. As before, the Company refused to abate their monopoly or to act upon it themselves. Michael Lok was one of the committee which examined the proposal. Its rejection caused him to leave the Company's service and become the ally of Frobisher. He may indeed have prompted Frobisher's application, for the seaman had been well known to the Lok family since the opening of the Guinea trade. The time was ripe for the plan to be tried. The idea that Nature exhibited broad symmetries was widely held. It created the belief in the great southern continent as a necessary balance to the land-masses of the northern hemisphere, and it fed also the belief in the North West Passage as a counterpart to the South West Passage discovered by Magellan: since there was a narrow way round the south of America it was held likely that there was a similar way round the north.

Frobisher's biographers have generally represented that he independently conceived the project of the North West and then attracted the support of Lok. But there is no evidence on the origin of Frobisher's ideas, and it is quite possible that the initiative was Lok's. Frobisher was not a bookish man capable of accumulating reams of notes, neither was he of an enthusiastic

¹ The source of Frobisher's interest in the North West has not been established. George Best, one of his officers, stated that his commander had been thinking of the discovery for fifteen years before he was able to attempt it. Professor Vilhjalmur Stefansson, in his recent edition of the Frobisher voyages, does not support the belief that Frobisher had met Gilbert in Ireland, and gives evidence suggesting that the two men became acquainted for the first time in 1575. See Stefansson's *The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher*, Argonaut Press, 1938, Introduction, pp. xcvi-ciii.

nature. He was a hard-headed seaman ready to place his talents at the service of any undertaking that promised wealth. Lok was the man of enthusiasm, theoretical learning, and financial ability, the typical promoter of the period. In a project capable of succeeding the two might have formed a brilliant combination, each supplying what the other lacked. Together they took further steps against the obdurate Company, and with Burghley's backing Frobisher obtained a command from the Queen that it must give way. The Company unwillingly did so in February 1575. So, under government patronage, but without a penny of State aid, the two men went forward with their scheme, and for the rest of the year Lok worked to obtain financial support in the City. It was not easy, for the City distrusted Frobisher for his past unscrupulous doings at sea.

Lok's geographical conception was the old one arising from Sebastian Cabot's claims, of North America tapering to a point at the northern end of Labrador, beyond which north-eastern Asia projected in an encircling crescent. Between the point of Labrador and the point of the Asiatic crescent, somewhere between 60 and 70 degrees of latitude, the opening would be found. Thence the strait would trend south-westwards, the voyager sailing with Asia on his right hand and America on his left, until he came fairly into the Pacific in about 40° N. In its simplest form the concept was drawn in the globes of Gemma Frisius, which were still being sold and studied in England. It appeared also in a map drawn by Sebastian Cabot and then existing in the library of the Earl of Bedford.¹ John Dee held the

¹ The Cabot map is now lost, but was seen by Richard Willes and described in his *History of Travel in the West and East Indies* (London, 1577), ff. 231-2.

same view of the shape of North America, although he did not believe in the projecting horn of Asia. He thought that on their right hand the passage-makers would have only 'broken lands' and open water, but this did not prevent him from agreeing that success was probable by the North West.

Frobisher sailed in June 1576, after a farewell interview with the Queen. Of his three vessels, a pinnace foundered off the coast of Greenland and a 25-ton bark deserted and made for home. He himself in the *Gabriel*, also of 25 tons, sighted Greenland, passed its southern extremity, and pressed on to the north-westward. In 62 degrees of latitude he raised the coast of Baffin Land and at once found what he sought, an inlet rather wider than the Straits of Dover. He named it Frobisher's Strait and sailed in. He duly saw America to port and Asia to starboard and recognised a tribe of Eskimo as Asiatics, all according to the preconceived plan. Had he gone farther he would have come to a dead end, for his strait was indeed a cul-de-sac which still bears his name on the modern map. But the savages captured five of his men and his only boat, leaving him fairly helpless for further exploration. With thirteen men surviving he came home in October to announce that the geographers were right and their Passage was found. He brought with him an Eskimo who passed muster as a Tartar of Cathay.

It is permissible to question what was really in Frobisher's mind. Did he believe that the first hole he had entered in a jagged coastline was by a coincidence veritably the strait laid down by the learned men on academic evidence? And did he reason honestly that because he had penetrated the inlet for sixty leagues, therefore it must continue open to the Pacific? Or was

he a realist earning his living, who had found good paymasters and was giving them what they expected to get? We cannot tell, but in this connection we must put out of our thoughts the famous Sir Martin Frobisher, one of the national heroes of the Spanish War. That figure belongs to a later date; in 1576 he was a needy sea-captain with abounding courage and a shady past. His physical strength was remarkable. On this first voyage an Eskimo paddled close in his skin *kayak*. Frobisher wanted him as an exhibit, and, leaning over the side, he lifted boat and man up to the *Gabriel's* deck. So we may think of him in London on his return, overbearing doubters by his sheer vitality.

The promoters were jubilant, and Lok set about the founding of a Company of Cathay, with subscriptions promised, but not all paid, by the Queen, the nobility and the merchants. Frobisher had brought home a piece of black ore, which he gave as a curio of no value to one who showed interest. The ore was assayed with negative result by several experts, but one declared that it contained gold and showed the sample he had recovered. At once the news spread that there was a gold-mine in the Straits, and the Cathay Company was launched with two-fold hopes of fortune. Lok was made Governor and Frobisher Admiral of the new venture, each to have one per cent of the goods brought home.

The Grenville party now revived its activities with a detailed criticism of the Lok-Frobisher achievement. The document is endorsed by Burghley 'Mr. Grenville's Voyage', which indicates a date previous to December 1577, when Grenville was knighted at Windsor. It argues that although Frobisher has discovered a strait leading past the north of America, there is yet no certainty that he will be able to enter the

Pacific, because there may be a land-connection between north-western America and north-eastern Asia. Another strait remains to be discovered, completing the separation of the continents. The memorialist refers to it as the Straits of Anian, by which he means what is now called Behring Strait. His conception of the relations between America and Asia is thus radically different from that on which Frobisher had been working and, as we now know, it is the true one. This leads Grenville to continue that the work will best be completed by his route through the Straits of Magellan, for, he argues, the unknown Straits of Anian will be more easily approached from the temperate Pacific than through the ice-strewn gate of Frobisher's Straits. What he now proposes is a circumnavigation of the Americas in a clockwise direction, from the Atlantic through Magellan's Strait to the Pacific, thence by the Straits of Anian (or Behring Strait) to the Arctic, and ~~out~~ again into the Atlantic by Frobisher's way. It is evident, however, that Grenville has no great interest in the last section of the route. He incorporates it because everyone is acclaiming it; but it is not essential to his plan of empire. What he emphasises is the Pacific itself, with the unknown lands in its southern area and the known certainty of Cathay towards the north. He decries Frobisher's discovery: 'Whatsoever northern island shall be discovered, there is no other commodity to be expected from it than only such as our Moscovian adventurers bring from Russia, seeing they are both subject to the Arctic circle. But from any land that shall in the other voyage be found we are assured to expect gold, silver, pearls, rich grain, and such most precious merchandise, besides countries of most excellent temperature to be inhabited.'

Presumably the above was written just after Frobisher's return and before the announcement of his gold discovery. It is the last evidence traceable of Grenville's interest in the Pacific. Thenceforward he drops out of the project, and another steps into his place.

Meanwhile, in the winter of 1576-77 Lok and Frobisher and the Cathay Company held the stage. It is convenient here to follow this enterprise to its end, with the proviso that while it was working to its climax and decline the south-western adventure actually took shape under the leadership of Drake. Frobisher sailed on his second voyage in May 1577, and Drake quitted Plymouth in December of the same year.

The Queen being a member of the Company, the Navy furnished the *Aid* of 200 tons for the second voyage. Her mission was to lade a cargo of the gold-bearing ore and return to England without passing farther into the Straits. For the latter purpose Frobisher had the two 25-ton barks of the previous expedition and a couple of pinnaces carried in pieces. With these small craft he was instructed to follow the passage until he came indubitably into the South Sea. He made scarcely a show of complying. Instead he loaded all his shipping with mineral and sailed for England, leaving the question of the North West Passage in exactly the same state as at the termination of the previous exploration. Moreover, he obtained the ore at a different locality from that which had produced the famous original sample, no more of which could be found. With his second voyage the undertaking ceased to be a quest for Cathay and became solely a mining speculation.

The reckless improvidence with which it was thenceforward conducted is well-nigh incredible to modern minds, but we have to remember that it was the first

transaction of its kind in English experience. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the reasoning faculty of representative Tudor Englishmen was in some directions not highly developed; when faced with an unfamiliar situation the men of education and men of affairs showed no more judgment or power of assessing evidence than the victims of a bucket-shop, and all their sagacity melted into a golden haze of emotion. It was not only Lok who was taken in by the force of his own imagination, but the city merchants and the nobles and courtiers who had subscribed their names to the project.¹ They all acted as though the ore had been proved to yield gold in paying quantities although in fact small samples only were assayed, with results about which the experts disagreed completely. Two foreign gold-finers said that the samples contained gold, whilst certain English goldsmiths denied that they did. The experiments were conducted without precaution against fraud (and it is fairly certain that fraud was deliberately committed); and even if the favourable results had been genuinely obtained there was still no guarantee that the yield would pay a profit on the costs. Frobisher, it must be said, was neither deceived nor a deceiver. So far as the evidence goes, it does not appear that he took any part in starting or maintaining the mania. He had been sent out to get ore and he fulfilled his orders, leaving the responsibility to those who framed them.

From the landing of the 200 tons of ore at Bristol in October 1577 to the sailing of Frobisher on his third expedition in the following May a period of seven months elapsed. During that time a commission of learned men

¹ Walsingham was at first sceptical of the ore, remarking that 'he did think it to be but an alchemist matter'. But neither he nor Burghley advised the Queen against taking a share. Her subscription was not large, but it involved her name and prestige.

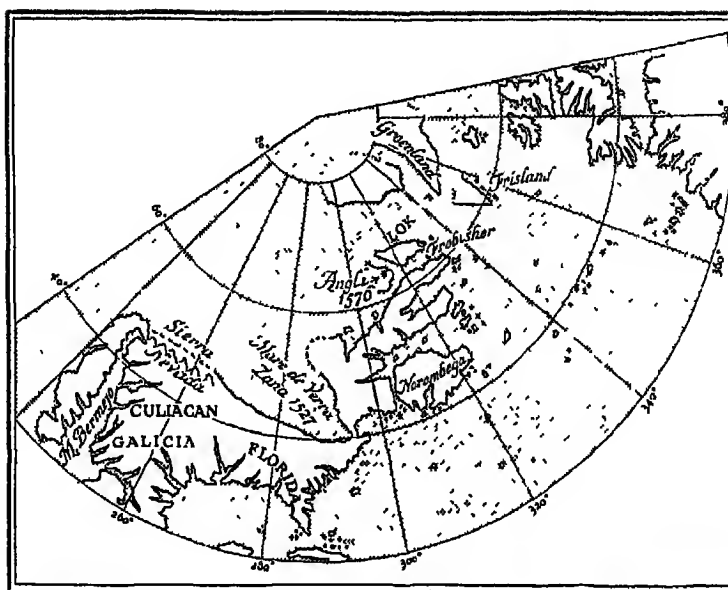
(including Dee) watched the assayers wrangling over their experiments and also studied the evidences of Frobisher's Passage. As a result the commissioners reported to the Queen that both matters were highly promising and should be proceeded with. Meanwhile Lok found it hard to raise money to pay the crews, and pledged his own and the Company's credit for the purpose. The wealth lying in the 200 tons of ore was not available, for in all England, it seemed, there were no furnaces capable of dealing with it. It is hard to believe that not even a specimen ton could have been sent into Sussex, where the men of the Weald smelted iron in sufficient bulk to make hard-hitting guns. But it was not done. The talk was all of the laboratory experiments and the future setting up of large-scale 'workhouses' at Dartford. Lok was an ardent believer in the ore, as his own financial ruin bears witness, but he seems to have postponed the crucial test much as Frobisher had refrained from probing any farther into the straits whose opening promised so well. The upshot was that on the strength of certain pin-heads of gold, of provenance not above suspicion, Frobisher was sent to sea again in 1578 with no less than fifteen ships, at a cost which the Company had no hope of defraying if the ore should prove a disappointment. It was by far the most expensive speculation recorded in the whole Tudor period, and was not to be paralleled until Raleigh took a very similar fleet to dig gold on the Orinoco in the reign of James I.

The sole object of this third voyage was to lade ore, but in fact it achieved an advance in exploration. Bad luck prevailed throughout, and when the expedition approached the scene of action continued thick weather prevented the fixing of its latitude. Consequently Frobisher found himself in a strait which he had to

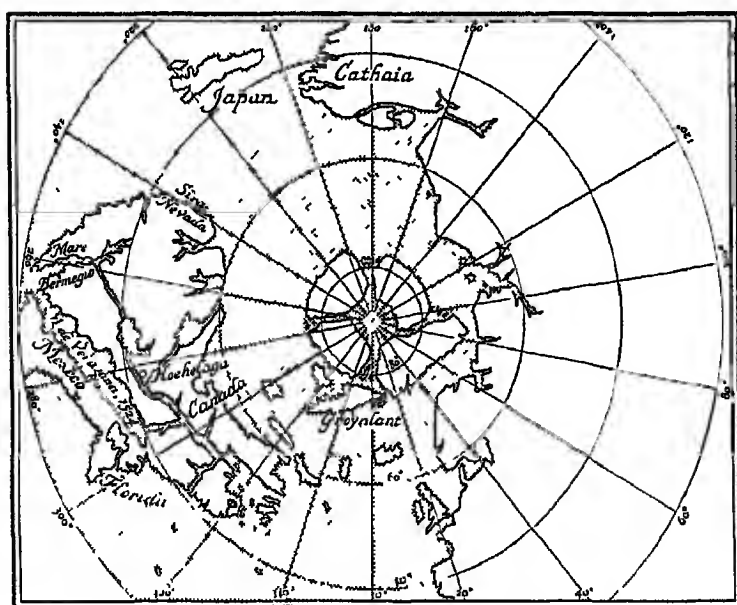
confess was not the right one. It was actually Hudson's Strait. He followed it for nearly two hundred miles before turning back, and concluded that it promised better hopes of Cathay than did his original discovery. That, it was henceforward agreed, was simply a channel amongst broken lands, more likely to lead the voyager astray than the coasting of what was now established as the northern shore of the American continent. From this time onward the English maps abandon the old conception of the projecting Asiatic horn embracing the northern tip of America; instead they show nothing but islands and open water between Labrador and the pole.

Frobisher would have liked to investigate further, but his instructions bound him. Amid storms and deadly peril from floating ice he collected his scattered fleet and entered his own strait. There, at various places, the crews tumbled rock into the boats and ferried it off to the ships. There was great haste and little supervision, for everyone was eager to go. The ice was worse than usual that season, and it was frequently necessary to free the ships. Captain Edward Fenton had been appointed to remain with a hundred men as a permanent garrison to guard the mines, but the ship which carried their equipment was sunk by ice, and the plan was given up. As soon as possible Frobisher sailed for home.

He arrived to find that all was over. Even now the ore of the second voyage had not been thoroughly tested, but belief in it had vanished as suddenly as it had arisen. Adverse rumours had begun to circulate, and panic had supervened on the boom. The Company was unable to discharge its debts. Many of its members had put their names down for shares but had not paid for them, and they now declined to pay; and the defaulters included so many influential people that it was impossible for



MICHAEL LOK'S MAP, 1582



SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT'S MAP, c. 1583

Lok to coerce them. For the Company was now Michael Lok: all others had ratted. It is not a pleasant story of the cream of Elizabethan society. Lok, trusting that the ore would pay for all, had used his private fortune and pledged his personal credit for the running expenses, and he was now set upon by the whole pack of creditors and deserted by his associates. Undoubtedly he was to blame, but for folly and not fraud. He still expressed a pathetic belief in the ore, but not a penny could be found for further experiments. He was sent to a debtor's prison, whence he wrote to Burghley that his wife and children were in want of bread. Frobisher rounded on him with the rest and spoke of him in harsh and ungenerous terms.

So ended the Cathay Company within eighteen months of its formation, and it is a curious circumstance that no one at that time thought it worth while to follow up those good hopes of the North West Passage which were discernible in the 'Mistaken Straits' of the third voyage.

CHAPTER X

DRAKE'S CIRCUMNAVIGATION: (I) TO PORT ST. JULIAN

WHEN Drake came home in 1573 with the plunder taken on the Isthmus of Panama and found that the state of affairs was unpropitious for the display of his winnings, he disappeared for two years during which time his movements are unknown. In 1575 he is found serving in Ireland under the command of Walter, Earl of Essex, in an attempt to pacify and colonise a district of Ulster. John Hawkins subscribed ships and money to the campaign, and it is very possible that the small vessels which Drake commanded were his. While on this business Drake made friends with Thomas Doughty, a gentleman in Essex's service, and talked with him about the project of entering the South Sea by the Straits of Magellan. We may be certain that Drake knew of the proposals that had been put forward by Richard Grenville and his friends; Oxenham's evidence is conclusive on that point. Thomas Doughty was a well-bred man of good education and a knowledge of that landsmen's world with which Drake had hitherto had little contact. He inspired the sailor with a warm admiration and a confidence that was not altogether well placed. For he lacked loyalty, and had already fallen into disgrace with his master Essex by some double dealing which had embroiled Essex with Leicester. When Essex had discovered the truth he

had disavowed Doughty and frankly apologised to Leicester.

In 1575 Essex exhausted his funds and discontinued his Irish attempt, and not long afterwards died. His followers dispersed, and in 1576 Drake and Doughty came to England. Drake had an introduction from Essex to Walsingham, the Secretary of State, then hand-in-glove with the Earl of Leicester. Doughty took service as private secretary to Christopher Hatton (knighted in 1577), a coming man at court, already Captain of the Guard and in high favour with the Queen; and furthermore Doughty by some means introduced himself to Lord Burghley. Drake had also a high connection in the Earl of Bedford, a great landowner in the west country, who was his godfather; but whether it was of any practical importance is not clear. Apart from this, however, Drake, with his proved reputation for courage and leadership, was now in touch with a group of great men who were ready to support plans for the expansion of England's interests across the ocean. Walsingham and Burghley had always an ear for such plans, and both gave support to the Lok-Frobisher project then coming to the stage of action. Leicester favoured bold policies of any kind and had already been a participator in John Hawkins's enterprises. Hatton also was eager to appear as a patron of expansion, and was at this time the recipient of Dee's confidential speculations on Lochac and the unknown South Pacific. Dee, in fact, permeated the governing circle, and his diary shows him to have been in frequent communication with all these men and even with the Queen herself.

In 1577 it was decided that the South Sea project should go forward in addition to Frobisher's push through the North West. Grenville's memorandum

that the Passage would best be completed from the Pacific side may have had an effect. But it was Drake and not Grenville who was appointed to the command. Drake's great acquaintances are a sufficient explanation. They had to choose between him and Grenville, and they judged him to be the better man. What Grenville said is not on record, but subsequent history is a silent testimony to the fact that he and Drake were not friends. In the Spanish War Grenville, with all his fighting spirit, never served on any occasion which would have brought him into collaboration with Drake, not even in the Armada campaign. Only when Drake was on the shelf did he come forward as a naval commander in the tragic voyage to the Azores in 1591.

It was not only Drake who jumped the claim of Grenville to command the expedition, but it was a court and official syndicate that supplanted Grenville's original group of Devon projectors. Recently discovered documents¹ show that the syndicate of 1577 comprised Leicester, Walsingham, Hatton, the Lord Admiral (Lincoln), Sir William Winter, George Winter, John Hawkins and Drake himself (for a venture of £1000). The only point of contact with Grenville's party is that William Hawkins had been a member of that body and that the Hawkins brothers generally acted in close alliance. The Queen was not at first made privy to the new undertaking, but came in with revolutionary effect before the plan had proceeded very far. Even without

¹ Discovered by Prof. E. G. R. Taylor and set forth by her, with supporting evidence, in *Geographical Journal*, January 1930, and *Mariner's Mirror*, April 1929 and April 1930. The most illuminating of these documents (Drake's instructions) is in the Cotton MSS. and has been available to students in the British Museum for over a hundred years past. It is remarkable that Corbett and all other biographers of Drake should have missed it.

her the syndicate was essentially a government body. Leicester, Walsingham and the Admiral were Privy Councillors, Hatton a personal friend of the Queen, Sir William Winter was Surveyor of the Navy and his brother Clerk of the Queen's Ships, and both of them were naturally henchmen of the Lord Admiral. As for John Hawkins, he was acting informally as Treasurer of the Navy, and formally took over that office before the year was out. The business was as fully a State undertaking, although capable of disguise, as Hawkins's West Indian expeditions had been.

At some time in the summer of 1577 a draft of instructions was made out 'for Captain Francis Drake'. They ordered him to pass through the Straits of Magellan and explore the continental coast beyond, described as not being under the obedience of any Christian prince. From the straits in 52° S. he was to proceed along the coast as far as latitude 30° S., to find out places fit for the sale of English goods, to prospect for treasure and rich commodities, and to make friends with the 'lords' of those countries, bestowing on them presents up to the value of £50. Having spent five months on the coast, he was to return by the Straits of Magellan, and it was estimated that the whole voyage would be completed in thirteen months.

Professor Taylor, who first brought these instructions to light, is of opinion that the continental coast from 52 to 30 degrees means the coast of Terra Australis Incognita, and the present writer fully agrees with her. It might be read as the coast of Chile, but there the Spaniards were in occupation as far south as Valdivia, almost in 40 degrees. To assume that Drake was ordered to treat as unoccupied territory the greater part of the province of Chile, including not only Valdivia but

Concepcion and Valparaiso and Santiago the capital, involves a remarkable ignorance on the part of the promoters, for Spain had possessed the region for nearly thirty years. That ignorance is, however, just possible, since it appears that on the voyage Drake was not equipped with the confidential Spanish charts which gave a true delineation of Chile and named its seaports, but only with the published works of Mercator and Ortelius which did not make the Spanish occupation clear. Nevertheless, even allowing that the true situation in Chile was unknown, the interpretation of the instructions as pointing to Terra Australis seems unavoidable. The unknown continent was the burden of the Grenville proposals, of the Mendaña discovery, and of Dee's insistence upon Lochac, and it was confidently set forth in the published globes and atlases of the greatest authorities on world geography. These cumulative circumstances are, in the writer's view, conclusive.

The plan was undoubtedly modified before Drake sailed. As drafted above, it implied a reconnaissance and a speedy return, with serious exploitation deferred to a subsequent expedition. But on his actual voyage Drake was evidently empowered to go on to the Moluccas, and very possibly after that to seek the Straits of Anian as a way home. Thus Grenville's entire programme of 1576-77 was ultimately incorporated in the scheme. The intended destinations were kept secret. It was given out that Drake was going to reopen trade with the Turkish ports of the Levant, and in June 1577 John Hawkins, with conscientious realism, drew up an estimate of expenses for a voyage to Alexandria by the ships *Pelican* and *Swallow*. The pretence was maintained, and the crews who actually sailed were engaged for a voyage to Alexandria, none but Drake and a

few of the senior officers knowing that any other was intended.

Burghley's part up to this point is not apparent. It has been generally supposed, on evidence that may have been misinterpreted, that an effort was made to conceal from him the whole business, on account of his well-known objection to piratical attacks upon Spain. But up to this stage there was ostensibly no attack upon Spain involved, although Drake's antecedents might well inspire the minister with misgiving. Actually it does not seem likely that there was any chance of concealing the preparations from Burghley. He had an efficient staff of secret agents and informers, and a project that was being elaborated by his fellow-ministers and the Navy officials would almost certainly have come to his ears. Probably he was told about it from the outset, and equally probably he raised no objection.¹ He had always been favourable to legitimate expansion, and in the Guinea disputes he had shown himself a firm supporter of the doctrine that England was free to exploit regions not effectively occupied by other Christian powers. But, however that may have been, there was something that he was not to be told; and here we come to the Queen's part in the affair.

The story of the Queen's participation rests solely on the evidence of Drake, given when he was in a difficult position and under temptation to distort the facts if it should suit his purpose. What he said to the disgruntled officers and men who surrounded him at Port St. Julian was as follows. After his introduction to Walsingham, the latter told him of the Queen's desire for hostile

¹ The document which names the promoters is mutilated, the upper lines being burnt off. The list is thus incomplete and may have included Burghley's name.

action against Spain and asked him to write a proposition for that purpose. Drake refused to put anything in writing, whereupon Walsingham conducted him to an interview with the Queen, who said: 'Drake! So it is that I would gladly be revenged on the King of Spain for divers injuries that I have received'. With that encouragement Drake then suggested to Her Majesty that after passing the Straits of Magellan he should attack the King in his wealthy colonies. Elizabeth approved the plan and gave it her sanction, at the same time enjoining secrecy and commanding 'that of all men my Lord Treasurer [Burghley] should not know it'.

Here then we have the secret plan with which Drake set out—instead of *Terra Australis* and its hypothetical treasures, Peru and its proven ones. That he worked on this plan is sufficiently obvious. Are we to believe his story that the Queen sanctioned it? On the whole, yes. Did she initiate it? Probably not: it is more likely that Drake first proposed it to Walsingham and that in his speech to his men he omitted that preliminary stage, for his necessity was to emphasise the Queen's will and to impress upon them that in resisting him they were resisting her. Who beside Drake knew the real intention at the moment of sailing? Walsingham certainly, but of any of the other promoters, even of Hatton and Leicester, there is a doubt; and it is not absolutely clear that Thomas Doughty knew. So far as we can tell, the expedition sailed with its officers believing that they were bound for *Terra Australis* and its crews for Alexandria, whilst three unscrupulous realists, the Queen, her Secretary and Drake, alone knew that once in the South Sea the geographers' plan was to be thrown overboard to make room for a cargo of cash. Lastly, why did the Queen take this serious step? As a matter of

policy its justification seems thin. It is true that in the latter half of 1577 the attempt to pacify the Netherlands broke down, Don John of Austria determined to establish Philip's despotism by force of arms, and England sent aid to the Prince of Orange. But with Elizabeth such a step was never final, and at the back of her mind she still clung to hopes of compromise. She did not then loose Drake as a prelude to regular war with Spain; to the last she recoiled from that, much as Walsingham might assure her that it was inevitable. The explanation can only be guessed at. Drake was to do something from which the Queen could make profit, and at the same time his position was such that she could disavow him if necessary. That is as much as we are entitled to say if we accept the story of their mutual understanding. There is indeed another alternative, that Drake fabricated the whole account and that the Queen never gave him any secret commission. It is a possible solution, but to the present writer it does not seem probable.

In the autumn Drake collected his ships, the *Pelican* (afterwards renamed *Golden Hind*), *Elizabeth*, *Marigold*, *Benedict* (pinnace) and *Swan* (storeship). Of the famous *Pelican*, although she was preserved as a national memorial for some time after the voyage, we have no very exact details and no drawing that can be regarded as clearly authentic. Her tonnage is variously stated, and was probably about 120 by English reckoning. She carried seven guns on each broadside and four others in forecastle and poop. Nuño da Silva, the Portuguese pilot, said that she was of French build and reasonably sound, good for a couple of voyages to Brazil and back. Early in 1577 there is record of a *Pelican* at Plymouth, very likely the same ship, in which case she probably belonged to the Hawkinses; in the Channel wars of the

seventies there was a good deal of buying and selling of ships between the Devon owners and the Huguenot rovers. The *Elizabeth*, 80 tons, was commanded by John Winter, son of George Winter, the Clerk of the Queen's Ships. The *Marigold*, 30 tons, was under John Thomas, a nominee of Hatton. These three vessels represented the fighting strength of the squadron. In addition to the 15-ton *Benedict* there were four smaller pinnaces carried in pieces for erection as required. The *Swan*, although of 50 tons, was lightly armed and taken only as a vehicle for surplus stores and men, to be absorbed by the fighting craft as vacancies arose.

The combined companies amounted to about 160 men and boys. They included Thomas and John Drake, respectively brother and nephew of Francis; William Hawkins, nephew of John Hawkins; the brothers Thomas and John Doughty; and Francis Fletcher, chaplain. A number of other men were ranked as gentlemen as distinguished from mariners. They were carried for training purposes, as prospective future officers, and added considerably to Drake's difficulties; he would probably have been happier without them. As a reinforcement of the after-guard they were disappointing, and none of them subsequently made any mark in our maritime history. There are indications that John Dee hankered after making the voyage to his beloved Lochac, but he did not go. If his literary style is any gauge of his conversation one can imagine Drake being excessively bored by his society.

Sailing from Plymouth in November 1577, the squadron was driven into Falmouth and there lost some masts in a great gale. Drake therefore returned to Plymouth to refit, and got finally away on 13 December. The first long stage of the voyage, from England to

Port St. Julian near the entrance of the Straits of Magellan, is notable chiefly for the dissensions which broke out, exhibiting mysterious features which have never been conclusively explained. At Cape Blanco, a fishing station on the Moroccan coast, the pinnace *Benedict* was left behind in exchange for a small Portuguese vessel renamed the *Christopher*. At the Cape Verde Islands Drake captured a Portuguese ship bound for Brazil and added her to his squadron as the *Mary*. Her value lay in her cargo of wines, for drink was always a problem with the English on long voyages; plain water soon went putrid, perhaps because it hardly ever was plain, and beer was not much better. Drake pressed into his service the *Mary's* pilot, Nuño da Silva, who has left a useful account of the voyage as he saw it.

Up to this point Drake and Thomas Doughty appear to have been on good terms, and Doughty was appointed to command the prize. Before long Drake was accusing him of seditious talk and of appropriating articles of value in the *Mary* which ought to have gone into the common stock. In consequence Drake himself took charge of the captured vessel and, very strangely, promoted the delinquent Doughty to the command of the *Pelican*. There had evidently been some discontent in her also, for Doughty made a speech to the crew when he came on board, telling them that they must amend their conduct and submit to his will, since the General (Drake) had given him full authority and power of life and death. So the squadron passed tediously through the doldrums, with its commander sailing in one of its least important vessels. It is possible that he was deliberately giving scope for the trouble to come to a head, although it was risking much to expose his biggest crew to the arts of a suspected officer. Before

long, as may be inferred from subsequent evidence, Doughty was seeking to corrupt the *Pelican's* people and to persuade them to desert with the ship. So Drake was told by a man whom he sent on board. He sent for Doughty but refused to hear his defence and immediately ordered him to the *Swan*, there to remain in a sort of open arrest. The charges were inciting to mutiny and conjuring, *i.e.* practising witchcraft in order to hinder the voyage. Such practices were believed possible by all seamen of that time, and Doughty himself believed that he had occult powers, or at least he boasted that he had. Neither Drake nor any of his officers had ever crossed the line before, and the equatorial calms were not to them a matter of course but a portent of evil omen.

After two months of heat, sickness and baffling airs they made the South American coast a little to the north of the River Plate. They stayed a fortnight in that estuary and then coasted southwards, entering Port Desire and finally Port St. Julian, just short of the Straits, where Magellan himself had done justice on his mutinous captains half a century before. During all this coasting the weather had continued strange, with sudden fogs and sudden gales, in which vessels parted company one after another and Drake spent valuable time in seeking them. Not until they reached Port St. Julian on 18 June 1578 was the whole squadron ever complete and under his hand. For Drake it was a trying time, with knowledge that sedition was afoot and fear that desertions might be taking place which would cripple the whole undertaking. His suspicions of Doughty's conjuring increased, and when the storeship *Swan* appeared after a long separation he learned that the prisoner had continually been making

disparaging speeches about him and asserting that they had been sent out with equal authority. Doughty was transferred more than once, always with the evidence accumulating against him, and arrived at Port St. Julian a close prisoner forbidden to write or to read anything but plain English.

Although some of this evidence is biassed against Doughty, some of it is from the mouths of his own supporters, and there is not the least doubt that he really was attempting to overthrow Drake's authority and break up the expedition. There is also no doubt that some of the officers were with him, chiefly the landsmen, although Winter also appears to have given him guarded sympathy. With a few exceptions the mariners were for Drake, and their hatred of the landsmen probably made his position less precarious than it seemed. At least, in spite of frequent opportunities, there was no vessel lost by intentional desertion.

The explanation of it all is obscure, and the whole truth may never be known. We have to judge provisionally from the attendant circumstances and the motives underlying the expedition, and more is now known of those motives than was known a few years ago. As we have seen, the generality had sailed under the impression that they were going to Alexandria. By the time the Cape Verde Islands were reached it was obvious that that was not to be the destination; and when the squadron assembled in Port St. Julian it was common property that Drake intended a raid on the treasure ports of the West Coast. It seems clear that he revealed this soon after leaving the Cape Verdes, when he was in waters where it was unlikely that any of his company would fall into the hands of the prospective enemy. He made no public announcement but

most likely allowed the thing to leak out by communicating it to a sufficient number of individuals. The intention must have been distasteful to the small group of higher standing who had believed themselves to be bound on a mission of exploration, commerce and colonisation. We are prompted to ask why they should object to having their fortunes made, but that is to read history backwards. Viewed from the starting-point the raid offered no guarantee of triumphant success, and however much the mariner might have hardened himself to any fate, being hanged as a felon was not an end that appealed to the land-bred gentleman. Hence the discontent of those who had been privy to the original plan of the voyage was natural.

Doughty thus had material from which to form a party. His own position was different from that of the other malcontents. It is almost certain that he had been in Drake's confidence from the outset, and likely that he had betrayed it before leaving England. A witness at Port St. Julian deposed that Doughty at Plymouth had said that the Queen and her Council would be corrupted for money. That, if true, argues that he knew of the treasure raid; but it may not have been true. Drake said that the Queen had ordered that Burghley was not to be told of the plan. Doughty himself admitted that he had told Burghley. Which plan had he told him? Of the raid, or of *Terra Australis*? It seems likely that he had told him of the raid. So Drake interpreted the admission, and Doughty did not gainsay him. On the whole, it is probable that Doughty had betrayed Drake's intention, which was also the Queen's, to the Lord Treasurer, and there is no doubt whatever that he had since been doing his utmost to frustrate it. That does not prove that Burghley had instructed Doughty to ruin the expedi-

tion. He may have given him a hint to use his influence to keep it on the straight path. He may have said nothing at all. Burghley was a judge of men, and Doughty's reputation was not of the best. If Doughty was the intriguer that his former master the Earl of Essex had believed him to be, it is likely that he was playing for his own hand, hoping to go home and merit Burghley's favour for having prevented piracy, but not having any clear commission to do so. That fits best with what is known of Doughty's character.

At Port St. Julian Drake brought his man to trial before a jury fairly impanelled from the friends as well as the enemies of the accused. There, amid invective and recrimination, the above evidence was unscientifically muddled out in the manner characteristic of all trials of the period. Neither Doughty nor his friends protested that there was anything unfair in the method of the proceedings; all they questioned was Drake's competence to hold them. On that Drake was vague. He said that he had a commission giving power of life and death, but he did not show it. The jury unanimously found the prisoner guilty of the 'articles' charged against him. What they were is inferentially clear, but there is no explicit record. The articles as now preserved are a mixture of pleadings and evidence, in which it is implied that Doughty was condemned for treason and incitement to mutiny. Drake sentenced him to death, and after two days he was beheaded. Before execution he dined with Drake in friendly fashion, and they received the sacrament together. It was common form then for a man to make a good end, in love and charity even with his slayers.

Views of Drake's conduct vary. Some have held that he took a justifiable course, others that he committed a

judicial murder. It turns really upon the nature of his secret understanding with the Queen. If she commanded him to carry out the treasure raid (and there is little doubt that she did) his conscience was clear, for with Doughty living, even as a prisoner, dissension would have been ruinous. To a man of action the royal command overrode all private scruples. On the other hand, Doughty apart, the malcontents, whom we must credit with wishing to carry out the colonising purpose, did not make a discreditable showing. They sympathised with Doughty but they did not join him in mutiny, and when it became a question of Drake's purpose or nothing they yielded.

To clinch the matter Drake had to make a final exhibition of his mastery. It was mid-winter, and the long nights alone rendered the time unfit for attempting the straits. A demoralising delay was inevitable, and the hatred between mariners and landsmen promised serious trouble. About a month after Doughty's death Drake put his foot down. On a Sunday he assembled the companies ashore and told Parson Fletcher that he would preach the sermon. It was the famous discourse in which he laid down the rules of discipline which all now agree must govern any hazardous undertaking; equal sharing of hardship and labour, no privilege of rank save that of officer's rank in the expedition, entire subordination to one man's will. It is obvious now, but it was revolutionary then. The gentleman expected to enjoy privilege even though as a man he was no more valuable than the common hand; and above all it was the tradition of the time that command should be exercised by a council and never concentrated in a single person.¹ Drake would have none of it. He chided the

¹ John Cooke, one of Doughty's supporters, wrote that Drake, Doughty

mariners for unruliness, but his weighty reproof was for the gentlemen's 'stomaching', their daintiness in face of toil: 'My masters, I must have it left. For I must have the gentleman to haul and draw with the mariner and the mariner with the gentleman. What! let us show ourselves all to be of a company, and let us not give occasion to the enemy to rejoice at our decay and overthrow. I would know him that would refuse to set his hand to a rope, but I know there is not any such here.' Then he turned to the ships' officers, John Winter included, and dismissed every one of them from his post, and so left them crestfallen while he continued with an appeal to all to rise to the great work before them. At the end, with every will bent to his own, he reinstated the officers, henceforward as servants of the Queen under her General Francis Drake, to sail against the Spaniard at his sole command. That moment saw the beginning of a new tradition in English leadership.

He had already gutted and destroyed the auxiliary vessels, reducing the squadron to the three fighting ships *Pelican*, *Elizabeth* and *Marigold*. On 20 August 1578 he sailed out of Port St. Julian for the Straits, having renamed his flagship the *Golden Hind*.

and Winter sailed as 'equal companions and friendly gentlemen'. The system had broken down.

CHAPTER XI

DRAKE'S CIRCUMNAVIGATION: (II) THE SOUTH SEA AND THE MOLUCCAS

THE narrators of Drake's voyage say little of the difficulties encountered in the passage of the Straits. It is evident that luck was with him, for the 300 miles of sailing occupied sixteen days, including halts for watering and victualling with penguins, of which fowl large numbers were met with. No other captain in the century passed the Straits so quickly. Magellan himself had taken thirty-seven days, while Cavendish and Richard Hawkins were to take forty-nine and forty-six respectively. The usual difficulty was the strong head wind in the second half of the passage, from Cape Froward to the Pacific. There the mountainous shores acted as a tunnel and brought any wind from a westerly quarter dead ahead, while anchorages were so few and unsafe that a ship might be near the exit and yet be compelled to run right back to the central salient at Cape Froward. This happened time and again to Richard Hawkins, although Drake seems to have had a fair wind right through.

But once in the South Sea the weather set in sufficiently foul to break most hearts and cause Drake himself to waver. It was on 6 September 1578 that the expedition debouched from the Straits, and for a few days made progress north-west. Then a violent gale blew from that quarter, the meteorological equivalent

of the south-wester of British waters, and continued in less or greater strength for over a month. Drake must have done his utmost to resist it, since for all he knew the continent of Terra Australis lay to the southward and he might at any moment have found himself on a lee shore. Yet he was driven south to 57 degrees,¹ 5 degrees higher than the Straits' mouth, and all agreed that they had never known storm so continuous and seas so terrific. On the 30th the *Marigold* parted company by night and was never heard of again. Fletcher says that she foundered and that he heard the cries of the drowning men, but others evidently did not think so, for there were hopes of meeting with her later on.² 'That night,' says Winter, 'was the most tempestuous night that ever was seen in this outrageous weather.' Next day there was an improvement. The gale had done its worst, and it became possible for the ships to make headway on a north-east course, which on 7 October brought them to the coast of Chile a little to the north of the Straits' mouth.

Drake anchored in a bay which proved to be no resting-place. Within an hour his cable parted and he had some difficulty in beating out to sea. Winter conformed, and at nightfall both ships were hove-to in a hard north-west wind, Drake being a league astern of Winter, and therefore nearer to the Straits. Winter ordered his master to keep good watch during the night for fear of losing company, but the weather grew worse, and in the morning the *Golden Hind* was not to be seen. Winter himself narrowly escaped driving on a rocky shore, and then sailed into the Straits for refuge.

¹ A latitude confirmed by Winter's recently discovered account.

² Eight years afterwards Cavendish saw a wreck in the Straits, which he described as the *John Thomas*. John Thomas was captain of the *Marigold*.

He says that he did not know whether Drake had been wrecked or had entered the Straits before him or was still at sea, but he regarded the Straits' mouth as the rendezvous and remained there for some days, lighting fires, until a strong wind drove him farther in. He asserts also that when he was last on board the *Golden Hind* Drake had talked of going directly for the Moluccas, and the whole context of his account shows that this was to have been done, not by thrashing into the teeth of the South Sea gales, but by running back through the Straits and eastwards round the Cape of Good Hope. Such is the most striking new contribution to the history of the voyage derivable from Winter's statement.¹

Winter remained a month in the Straits, during the whole of which time the wind was between N.W. and W. As the days passed he began to conclude that Drake was either cast away or already to the eastward of him. He determined to sail independently for the Moluccas, and broached the matter to some of his company, reading to them the account of Magellan's voyage, 'which they seemed to like well of'. Then, after victualling with penguins, he announced to the whole crew his determination, 'which was for the east parts of the world, using what persuasion I could. And pro-

¹ One crucial point is vague: when was it that Drake had discussed this intention with Winter? Possibly during a lull in the first month of hard weather, less likely during the brief hour of refuge in the bay north of the Straits. The relevant passages which indicate the eastward course to the Moluccas are too long for quotation here, but Professor Taylor has printed Winter's account *verbatim* in *Mariner's Mirror*, April 1930. Confirmation is found in a subsequent statement by one of Drake's prisoners on the coast of Peru. He was told, he said, by the English that 'in that time [Sept.-Oct.] they lost two more of their ships, and heard no more of them, but as they judged they were gone towards the Moluccas by the island of Madagascar or St Lawrence'.—*Ibid.* p. 146.

tested unto them upon the Bible that Mr. Drake told me he would go thither when I was last aboard of him.' The master, however, refused and infected the men with his defeatism. He had been hired for Alexandria, he said, but if he had known that this was to be the Alexandria he would have been hanged rather than have sailed. And so all refused to steer for the Moluccas. Winter was powerless, and as the pitiless west winds still precluded any hope of making for Peru he passed eastward out of the Straits and sailed for England. He arrived in June 1579, and was well received in official circles. But afterwards, when Drake had come home laden with wealth, one of Winter's men named Edward Cliffe, jealous at having missed a great chance, wrote an account in which he omitted all mention of the Moluccas and charged Winter with having turned homewards 'full sore against the mariners' minds'. Cliffe's story was printed by Hakluyt, and Winter's statement remained unknown for 350 years; and thus it passed into history that John Winter dishonourably deserted from the greatest enterprise of his time—which is not true.

Meanwhile Drake had remained in the South Sea. When he lost sight of the *Elizabeth* he was driven to the south of the Straits and endured nearly another month of bad weather among the small islands that fringe the south side of Tierra del Fuego. There, during a temporary lull, he landed on an island which, so far as he could see, was the southernmost point of land in that part of the world. Corbett accepts this as the discovery of Cape Horn; Mr. Wagner identifies it with Henderson Island, some fifty miles W.N.W. of the Cape. It is of no great importance, for the point common to both interpretations is that Drake believed that there was here no southern continent but that the

Atlantic and Pacific Oceans merged in open water to the south of America. Although Drake could have absolutely proved this only by going right back round Tierra del Fuego to the Atlantic mouth of the Straits, his assumption was nevertheless correct, and he is substantially the discoverer of this great geographical fact. After his return some English cartographers drew this region in the modern style, without showing Terra Australis, while others retained the traditional conception. It was evidently many years before the Spaniards knew the truth, with which Drake was careful not to acquaint those whom he captured on his West Coast raid.

In recent times sailing ships have invariably used the Cape Horn passage in preference to the Straits, but the reasons for doing so were not so weighty three hundred years ago.¹ This was because ships then needed larger crews in proportion to their size, and facilities for storing food-stuffs were much scantier. Consequently they were always short of victuals before entering the Pacific, and the penguins of the Straits afforded a necessary supply. The non-stop voyage of the modern ship from Europe to the Pacific was then an impossibility. It may be noted that the Dutch were the pioneers in solving the problem of the prolonged ocean voyage. In the early seventeenth century they were making so great improvements in the details and rig of sailing-ships that they were able to cut down the numbers of their hands to less than half of those still thought necessary by their English competitors at the same period. This commonly unnoticed circumstance must have been a very large factor in producing the economic supremacy of Dutch merchant shipping.

¹ Cf. the remarks of Sir Richard Hawkins on the subject in his account of his own voyage into the South Sea.

At the beginning of November Drake's luck turned, and he found winds which enabled him to sail northwards. By the 15th he had reached latitude $45\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ S., and ten days later he approached the Island of Mocha on the Chilean coast in $38\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. He must have been glad enough to leave the Straits behind him, and he did not look in to seek Winter; the chance of finding him was small and the folly of wasting a fair wind great. Although Drake had talked of running eastwards, it is clear that he had not positively determined on it when he last saw Winter, and there was a further rendezvous fixed at a point on the Chilean coast. Drake had still faint hopes of finding his lost ships there, but Winter in the Straits had never had a wind which would enable him to pass out westwards.

The well-known facts of what Drake did on the West Coast are no proof that it was what he intended to do. He could not have counted on taking a rich treasure-ship at sea, and from certain allusions it seems possible that he meant to pass up the coast and attack Panama. He knew that Oxenham had sailed for the Isthmus in 1576, and at the time of quitting England in 1577 he could not have known that Oxenham had already come to grief. There was thus the possibility of joining forces with Oxenham and the Cimaroons for the capture of Panama and that permanent occupation of the Isthmus which the Spaniards so greatly dreaded. If he had had his three fighting ships and their full crews there would even have been the possibility without Oxenham. Speculation without evidence is generally undesirable, but we may perhaps play for a moment with the idea that this was what Drake had proposed to the Queen, and that her diplomacy would have made exquisite use of an English force at Panama—disavowable at need—in

getting her own way with Philip on all the questions at issue between them. It was a plan that was certainly entertained on two later occasions, in 1585 and 1595. However, in 1578 it was not to be. Drake himself was shorthanded, and from his first Spanish prisoners he learned that Oxenham was at Lima.

From the Island of Mocha, where several of the crew were killed or wounded through trusting the Indians too incautiously, Drake made the mainland and found that he was north of Valparaiso. He went back to that place, then little but a village, and captured 25,000 *pesos* of Chilean gold on board a vessel in the port. This exploit, on 5 December 1578, marks the beginning of the raid. Hence he passed up the coast seeking a harbour in which to water and refit. He found it in Salada Bay, where he stayed until 19 January 1579, careening and tallowing the *Golden Hind*, mounting guns from her hold, and setting up a pinnacle from frames and planks carried ready shaped. So unprepared were the Spaniards of Chile for his visitation that the delay did not result in the warning of the ports farther north. On 4 and 5 February he captured some silver at Tarapaca and Arica and missed a cargo at Chule, where the Spaniards got the treasure ashore just in time to disappoint him. Off Callao on 13 February he took a small vessel and heard news of the *Cacafuego*,¹ a ship with an immensely rich lading bound for Panama with a long start ahead of him. He could not pass Callao, the chief seaport of Peru, without looking in to see what it would afford. It afforded little in plunder, but he disabled most of the shipping anchored there by cutting the cables and letting the vessels drive out to sea before the land-breeze.

¹ So called by irreverent Spanish seamen, her official name being *Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion*.

In spite of this the Viceroy of Peru was able to organise a pursuit by a crowd of men in unarmed vessels. Fortunately for themselves these Spaniards did not get near enough to be massacred by the *Golden Hind's* guns, and they returned disconsolate to port.

The chase of the *Cacafuego* was now the principal object. Drake came up with her on the evening of 1 March and captured her with ease. In spite of her nickname she was virtually unarmed and entirely unsuspecting. Her treasure was chiefly of Peruvian silver and provided a full cargo for the *Golden Hind*. Her captain's name, San Juan de Anton, was unusual for a Spaniard, and it has been surmised that he was an Englishman, St. John of Hampton (Southampton was named Antona on the Spanish maps). If so there is not the slightest ground for suspecting that he was in collusion with Drake, for it is impossible to suggest how their meeting could have been arranged. When San Juan de Anton had sailed from Callao no one there had heard of Drake's being in the South Sea.

With the transference of the *Cacafuego's* lading the voyage was very thoroughly 'made'. Drake had no desire to stay and meet the force which he guessed that Lima would send after him, and he knew that there was no good to be done by going to Panama. He had tried unavailingly to save Oxenham by sending a message to the Viceroy, threatening reprisals if any more Englishmen were executed. The message had been taken by a released prisoner, set free as all other Spaniards were with the least possible delay or hard treatment. The example had no more effect than the threat, and Oxenham and his companions were hanged in the following year. Having thus completed his business on the Peruvian coast, Drake steered due north-

wards, far to seaward of the windless Gulf of Panama, and sighted the coast of Nicaragua on 16 March. Here he captured in a small vessel two Pacific pilots who were going to Panama to take a ship to Manila. They refused to guide him across the Pacific, but their charts and sailing directions were a valuable prize. In another vessel he took Don Francisco de Xarate, a gentleman of rank whose subsequent report to the Viceroy of Mexico contains much information about Drake and his ship. It should be accepted with caution, for some of the particulars of the *Golden Hind* are grossly exaggerated.

To many of the Spaniards Drake had talked of his plans for sailing homewards, but his purpose had been to mystify them rather than to give information. Consequently the authorities at Lima had no real knowledge of what he meant to do. After his first pursuers had returned empty-handed the Viceroy of Peru sent out another and better equipped force. Its commander concluded that Drake would enter the Gulf of Panama, presumably in order to abandon the *Golden Hind*, cross the Isthmus, and capture shipping for England on the north coast. Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, the best officer among the pursuers, was emphatic that Drake would do no such thing and advised looking for him in Nicaraguan waters, but he was over-ruled. The Spanish armament therefore went tamely into Panama, and Drake heard nothing of them.

Meanwhile Drake was bound northward. He obtained victuals and water at Guatulco in Guatemala, a small port which he captured and occupied for three days. Then on 16 April he left for the vaguely known coast of California. The exact history of the navigation which followed has never been established. Authorities

are at variance on the latitude reached and the identification of the places visited. Bearing in mind that he had obtained good information on the Pacific winds, we may accept the statement that he sailed far out into the ocean on some westerly bearing in order to avoid the north-west wind which at that season blows along the coast. Then he turned northwards closing the coast until he came into the area of the north-wester. By one account he went as far as 48 degrees, but others give lower figures. The weather was rough, and the crew suffered much from cold and observed snow on the shore. The story is probably exaggerated, for these details are not confirmed by modern records of Californian conditions. After reaching his highest latitude Drake ran southwards along the coast until he stopped at a good anchorage, not unanimously identified, but evidently near the modern San Francisco.

Drake's purpose in making the northward push is commonly stated to have been that of seeking the North West Passage, and it is the obvious explanation. The accepted delineation of North America showed the Passage trending from the region of Frobisher's discoveries south-westward to the open Pacific at a point not higher than 40 degrees. Drake had been higher than this point, at which he ought to have found the coast turning towards Europe, and had found it lying at right angles to the desired direction. It was evident therefore that the mouth of the Passage did not open in the latitude hitherto supposed or for several degrees north of it. At that he was obliged to leave it. It was now June, the ship needed a thorough refit, and there would not be time to make another cast northward, higher than on the previous attempt, before the season would be too far advanced for a successful exit by

Frobisher's dangerous gate at the Atlantic end. As we know now, the whole thing was impossible, and even on the optimistic theories of that time Drake was well advised to give it up. The failure probably did not trouble him. The Moluccas were in his programme and he had learned the way thither, after which he could follow the Portuguese route by the Indian Ocean. At sea the longest way round is often the quickest way home.

At the Californian anchorage there was heavy work to be done in repairing the ship. She was leaking badly, and everything had to be taken out of her and a fort built on shore for its protection from the natives. These latter, however, proved rather a nuisance than a danger. They repeatedly arrived in crowds and performed elaborate ceremonies to the interruption of work, showing an intrusive interest in the persons and possessions of the white men. Drake humoured them and annexed the country under the name of New Albion,¹ although neither the land nor its people appeared in the least attractive. There is no reason to suppose that he thought of colonising it in the ordinary meaning of the term, but it would have great value as a post for refitting and refreshment if ever the North West Passage should be opened; and even for a voyage like his own it was obviously useful. So he cultivated the

¹ Drake set up a brass plate with an inscription recording the annexation. In 1937 a plate was picked up near San Francisco. Local opinion in California is divided on the question of its genuineness. The inscription upon it is in terms such as might reasonably be expected, although the spelling of one word is hard to accept as Elizabethan. Owing to differences in the methods of extracting zinc, sixteenth-century brass is chemically distinguishable from modern brass, and it has been suggested that a test by a competent metallurgist might be illuminating. See articles by R. B. Haselden and A. L. Chickering in *California Hist. Soc. Quarterly*, 1937, September.

esteem of the Indians and did all he could to impress them with the might and benevolence of the English. In the next century the Dutch found a comparable land and people at the Cape on their way to the East, and the use they made of it may serve as an indication of what probably lay in Drake's mind at New Albion.

At the close of July 1579 Drake was ready to sail. He crossed the Pacific in the belt of the north-east trades, and after two months sighted an island whose people were thievish and overbearing and had to be repulsed by force. Having read Magellan's voyage he called it the Island of Thieves, but it appears not to have been one of Magellan's *Ladrones*. Then after another month he passed by the southern Philippines and came to the small spice-bearing islands of the Moluccas. These insignificant units were valuable as the only known producers of cloves in the whole world. The Portuguese had a garrison at Tidore, but were at war with the Malay sultan of the neighbouring island of Ternate. Drake took advantage of the situation by making an alliance with the sultan and obtaining from him a promise to sell his produce exclusively to the English. The treaty, for so it was always called, was probably verbal and informal, but great importance was attached to it, and it was regarded as an achievement surpassing the capture of Spanish treasure. To Drake it was useful as a sop to the colonial party among his backers, who might have felt sore at his abandonment of the scheme for *Terra Australis*; and soon after his return plans were afoot to follow up the Spice Islands connection. It is fairly clear that the sultan displayed no open-hearted affection for the English, regarding them only as a stick to chastise the Portuguese, and he was so bellicose that his friends did not

feel at ease in his waters. The *Golden Hind* needed another scrub and refit, but Drake stayed only four or five days at Ternate and left with six tons of cloves to seek a quieter spot for his purpose. He careened at an uninhabited islet and then set forth on the last stage of the voyage.

The *Golden Hind*, the first English ship in the Pacific, was also the first in the Indian Ocean. In the intricate border region of rocks, islands and swift currents she met with a disaster that narrowly missed proving fatal. After three weeks' probing for a passage the ship, running before a strong wind on the evening of 9 January 1580, struck a submerged rock. It was fortunately smooth and shelving and her planking was not pierced, but with the wind continuing no means availed to get her off. To leeward there was only six feet of water, and to windward no bottom could be found to which an anchor could be carried out. For twenty hours it seemed that all was over. All prayed, and Francis Fletcher administered the sacrament, and guns and even three tons of the precious cloves were jettisoned. Then the wind eased, and suddenly the ship slid off the rock in the direction from which she had run on. She floated intact, having escaped a greater peril than the storms of the Southern Ocean.

Two more months elapsed before Drake was clear of the dangerous archipelago. He appears to have had charts, but even the best of those days would be considered valueless by a modern navigator, and his escape was due to vigilance and good fortune. He careened once more on the south coast of Java, established friendly relations with the natives, and shaped his course on 26 March for the Cape of Good Hope. The end of June saw him in the Atlantic, in what must

have seemed home waters once again after the two years which had elapsed since he entered the Straits of Magellan. Certainly when he reached Sierra Leone a month later he was in a familiar scene, for he had been there with Hawkins in '68. He filled his casks and thence sailed on the long sweep north-westwards across the trades and home with the westerlies into the Channel. He entered Plymouth on 26 September 1580, and his first question to some fishermen was whether the Queen was alive and well.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST YEARS OF PEACE

AT this period of Elizabeth's reign it is to some extent misleading to classify English public men as constituting a peace party and a war party, for that distinction would imply that England was free to choose between peace and war. Actually few or no men thought so. To them it seemed that the Counter Reformation was maturing its preparations for a grand attack upon heresy and that England would be obliged to fight if she would remain free and Protestant. The difference of opinion was not between peace and war at England's choice, but rather between war postponed and war at once. The advocates of delay could argue that with each year gained the country was growing richer and its government more firmly seated, and that the defences were inadequate and needed time for improvement; moreover, the civil wars of the continent were keeping occupied the hostile forces that would otherwise attack us, and therefore it would be foolish to take the initiative in ending that favourable position of affairs. The party of immediate action pointed to the ceaseless propaganda which they believed to be making headway in England, and denounced the folly and dishonour of allowing our natural allies the continental Protestants to be overcome while we stood still; the end would be, they said, that England would fight without a friend against greatly strengthened enemies.

Broadly speaking we may say that this was the difference between Burghley and Walsingham, with the proviso that Burghley was an opportunist who constantly weighed the situation to judge whether delay was still feasible. There were moments when even he thought that the time for action had come, and then it was usually found that the Queen held back against the counsel of all her ministers. The event justified the Queen, but at the time her policy reduced Walsingham and sometimes Burghley to despair.

The belief that Burghley was determined not to fight rests largely upon the reports of Bernardino de Mendoza, the last Spanish ambassador of the reign, who arrived in 1578. He was persuaded of the existence of the peace party and the war party. But Burghley was an adept in handling Spanish ambassadors, and it obviously suited his game of postponement to pose as the friend of Spain, striving hopefully against those who would plunge into war. While soothing the Spaniard he was also looking to the Navy, which his nominee John Hawkins was reorganising with might and main.

The great reform of the Navy will be dealt with in a later chapter, but here we may consider a document drawn up by Hawkins in 1579. Its date is 12 August, nine days after the first news of Drake's Peruvian raid had reached London by way of Seville. The probability is that Burghley expected war and directed Hawkins to prepare a plan for the employment of the fleet. That, however, is inference, and all we have is the plan as Hawkins produced it. He recommended the immediate fitting-out of a squadron composed of four of the Queen's medium-sized ships, five armed merchantmen and eleven pinnaces. If there were no delay, they would be in time to attack the returning plate-fleet and were

reckoned to be strong enough to overcome its escort. But there was of course no certainty of meeting with the plate-fleet, and the main object of the expedition would be to raid the Caribbean, destroying its ports and shipping: 'there is to be stricken with this company all the towns upon the coast of the Indies, and there need not to be suffered one ship, bark, frigate or galley to survive untaken'. That this was no irresponsible proposition is clear from Hawkins's position. Until Drake's triumphant return in 1580 Hawkins was regarded as the country's greatest sea-commander, and he had been kept at home for the past ten years in order that he might assume professional charge of the fleet should war break out. He had lately been made Treasurer of the Navy, and students of his correspondence know that the majority of his official letters are addressed to Burghley, whom he undoubtedly regarded as his patron. The plan of 1579 is therefore a fair indication that Burghley was quietly facing possibilities and considering years in advance the action which it fell to Drake to carry out in 1585.

At an earlier date Sir Humphrey Gilbert had submitted a war plan, less probably with Burghley's approval, but undoubtedly with Walsingham's. In November 1577, as Drake was about to sail for the Pacific, Gilbert produced *A Discourse how Her Majesty may annoy the King of Spain*. What he proposed was not regular warfare but an aggression of the sort that the Queen could disavow if she saw fit. Under colour of letters patent empowering him to plant a colony, with a clear provision forbidding an attack upon the prospective victims, he planned a raid upon the Newfoundland fishing fleets of Spain, Portugal and Catholic France—the fishery being a special occupation of the Bretons.

This, if successful, would yield the value of the season's fishing, wherewith Gilbert would equip a stronger force and proceed to attack the Spanish coasts of the Caribbean. Thus 'the diminishing of their forces by sea' would be done as in Hawkins's later plan, but without ostensibly compromising the Queen. Gilbert, like Drake, was prepared to play the pirate if he might do so with Elizabeth's secret approval. He seems not to have obtained it so far as the fishery was concerned, and for England's credit it was just as well. To rob thousands of fishermen, many of them not coming within the category of national enemies, would have been a heartless proceeding of a quality quite different from Drake's plundering of wealthy Spaniards, which at least had the excuse of reprisal for a cruel piece of treachery.

Gilbert obtained his patent in June 1578. It gave him wide powers of colonisation and governance in lands not already under the jurisdiction of a Christian prince, the understanding being that he was to operate on the Atlantic coast of North America. It is not, as some have supposed, the first grant of its kind, 'the title-deed of the British Empire', for in principle and phraseology it resembles the patents granted by Henry VII to the Bristol syndicates of 1501 and 1502, which sought to follow up John Cabot's discovery of the 'New Found Land'. Gilbert collected a strong fleet, but was not ready to sail until November. It is thus evident that his purpose was not that of attacking the Newfoundland fishermen, who were by that time all back in their home ports. The expedition was a failure before it started, three months having been spent in wrangles and dissensions between the officers. Three ships under Henry Knolles refused to follow Gilbert. With the others, including one commanded by his half-brother Walter Raleigh, he set

forth on a winter voyage of whose purpose and fortune little or nothing has come to light. Perhaps he was seeking the plate-fleet, perhaps bound for the Caribbean. Most of his ships were home by February 1579, having had a sharp fight with some Spaniards and obtained no booty.

In 1579 Burghley carried out a sound piece of preparation for war by reconstituting the English merchants trading to the Baltic. These traders had been chartered as a regulated company by Henry IV in 1404, but in the course of the fifteenth century the powerful Hanseatic League had hounded them out of the Baltic seaports, and their organisation had become virtually extinct. In the early Tudor period Englishmen did business in the Baltic, but always under difficulties, for it was the policy of the Hansa to restrict the conveyance of Baltic goods to its own shipping. Then in the reigns of Edward VI and Mary the English government revoked the excessive privileges enjoyed by the League in England. The League retaliated by stopping all trade. In 1560 the dispute was patched by up a treaty yielding some of the former privileges on condition that Englishmen should receive reciprocal treatment in the Hanse ports. By 1579 England had grown stronger and the League had declined, and on the occasion of a fresh dispute Burghley reduced the Hanse merchants to an unprivileged position of equality with other foreigners in England. At the same time he moved the Queen to issue a new charter to the English traders, constituting them the Eastland Company under a governor elected by themselves and with a monopoly of the trade. The significance of the step lay in the nature of the Baltic produce, which comprised the cables and cordage, canvas, pitch and long spars essential to the

equipment of the Navy. In the days of its strength the Hanseatic League had exercised a stranglehold upon England by its control of these supplies. Henry VIII had felt obliged to place the welfare of his fleet before that of his merchants, and had maintained the irksome privileges of the League. Edward and Mary, perhaps less well advised, had defied it, and the Navy had suffered; Calais had fallen in 1558 because it had been impossible to send a squadron to sea in that disastrous winter. Now Burghley had mastered the problem after twenty years of patient work. His Eastland Company was a successful and essential step in the rearmament then in progress. The Company performed its part in the national defence until the Baltic question was reopened by the rise of Dutch sea-power in the following century.

The Muscovy Company, trading with Russia by the White Sea, had obtained Asiatic produce by extending its route southwards into Persia, until Turkish aggression brought the venture to an end. The Company's monopoly covered all new discovery in latitudes north of England. As we have seen, it had been compelled to forego its rights in the North West on the demand of Lok and Frobisher; but their Cathay Company had failed, and the threat to the Persian trade rendered necessary a new attempt to gain intercourse with Asia. Drake was trying it by way of the Straits of Magellan, and in 1578-80 some independent merchants of London were seeking facilities from the Turks for a trade through their dominions in the Levant. The Muscovy Company was thus spurred to exploit its own sphere in the northern seas, and in 1580 it despatched a well-planned expedition for the opening-up of the North East Passage.

The exploration of 1580, although abortive, is full of

interest. It enjoyed a quantity of expert advice from learned authorities, it was under government patronage and assisted by the Navy officials, and it had a broadly viewed strategical purpose. Drake had last been heard of upon the coasts of Peru and Central America. Presumably he was still in the Pacific or at the Moluccas, and the difficulties of the homeward route by the South were well known. There was a possibility that if the Muscovy ships could reach tropical Asia they might fall in with him and guide him home with his vast booty by a much shorter track than that which, unknown to all, he was actually following round the Cape of Good Hope.¹ So thought Dee, and so possibly thought Hawkins and the brothers Winter, members of the Navy Board and investors in Drake's undertaking. The idea was talked of on the continent, as is shown by a letter from Mercator to Ortelius later in the year.

William Borough was called into council to give advice on the practical details of navigation and surveying; on the latter point he was entitled to be heard, since he was the author of an excellent chart of the White Sea and adjacent coasts. Dee supplied the broad geographical conception, namely, that no part of the northern coast of Asia would be found to reach a latitude as high as the North Cape of Norway in 72° . He derived this from his study of Abulfeda, the Arab geographer of the fourteenth century. A single copy of Abulfeda's book had been discovered early in the Tudor period, and its contents were now available only in an epitome published by the Italian editor Ramusio. On this authority Dee placed Cape Tabin, the northernmost point of Siberia, in 70° , and held that after passing it the voyager would find the coast slanting away south-east-

¹ See Taylor's *Tudor Geography*, p. 128.

wards until he came into the China seas. Hence Dee regarded the passage as easy. Neither he nor any of his contemporaries realised that the climatic conditions of the Norwegian coast were exceptional owing to the warm air and water currents from the Atlantic. They all assumed that climate was strictly dependent on latitude and that the Siberian waters would be as ice-free as the North Cape. Mercator dissented from Dee in placing Cape 'Tabin in $77\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ and in thinking that it would be a serious obstacle less by reason of ice than by its nearness to the magnetic pole, which would disable the compass; but he held that before reaching the Cape the mouths of the great Siberian rivers would be found, and that they would form navigable highways into China. Mercator's advice, solicited by the younger Richard Hakluyt (afterwards the collector of the famous *Principal Navigations*), came too late to be available. Meanwhile the elder Richard Hakluyt (the lawyer and economist) had supplied the commanders with notes on the methods and articles of trade most desirable in the national interest.¹

Thus equipped, Captains Arthur Pett and Charles Jackman set forth in the *George* and the *William* in May 1580. The ships' names are those of the brothers Winter, Pett was presumably a member of the family prominent for generations in the naval dockyards, and altogether there is a suggestion of close connection with the Navy Board. Jackman was an officer who had served under Frobisher in the North West. The expedition passed south of Nova Zembla into the Kara Sea. After parting company in a gallant struggle against

¹ For the preliminaries of the 1580 voyage see E. G. R. Taylor, *Tudor Geography* and *The Original Writings of the Two Richard Hakluyts* (Hakluyt Society, 1935).

dreadful perils of ice, in latitudes which by theory should have been ice-free in summer, both commanders had to turn back. Pett returned to England. Jackman wintered in a Norwegian port, whence he sailed in 1581 on a further exploration, from which no news of him was ever heard. It is evident that the two captains did their utmost, and the failure was a decisive blow to English hopes of the North East for the remainder of the century. The Dutch took up the quest in 1596, and Shakespeare's simile 'like icicles on a Dutchman's beard' is held to be a topical allusion to the Barentz expeditions.

In these years of impending war the revival of the Levant trade also took place. In the early Tudor period many English merchants and captains had made voyages to the Levant, among them Richard Chancellor and Anthony Jenkinson, but they had never been incorporated as a regular company. After 1550 the trade died out owing to the risks from Turkish piracy and lack of support from the English government. The Venetians were still carrying on a remnant of their ancient commerce, and the French maintained an ambassador at Constantinople by whose efforts their merchants enjoyed some protection. Diplomatic intercourse with the Porte was essential to a satisfactory trade, and so also was the organisation of the merchants in a recognised company. In 1575 two wealthy Londoners, Edward Osborne and Richard Staper, took the initiative. They sent agents through Poland to Turkey and obtained a safe conduct for their factor, William Harborne. He arrived at Constantinople in 1578 and opened trade, but met with much opposition from the French. In spite of this, Harborne secured a grant of privileges from the Sultan in 1580, whereby English

subjects were to be recognised and protected. French influence afterwards procured a cancellation of the grant, and it was obvious that no good could be expected unless the English representative should be placed on an equality with the French as a duly accredited ambassador.

The merchants now appealed to Burghley and Walsingham, who both favoured the project. The result was the issue of letters patent in September 1581 incorporating twelve original members as the Turkey Company, with Osborne as governor. In the following year the Queen appointed William Harborne as her ambassador to the Sultan, all his expenses being defrayed by the Company. Harborne displayed energy and good sense, maintaining the prestige of his country, foiling his French rivals, and securing the reissue of the original privileges with more in addition. The Company worked by the joint-stock method and employed a fleet of large ships which had necessarily to be well armed, for the whole Mediterranean from Gibraltar to Syria was beset with enemies. It was this which had attracted the Queen's ministers, who had foreseen that a vigorous Levant trade would entail the creation of an armed squadron manned by fighting seamen. In fact the Company's ships-of-war were a combatant force second only to the Queen's Navy, and they not only cost the State nothing but paid handsome sums to the customs. In 1592, the first patent having expired, the Turkey merchants were amalgamated with another body trading to Venice and took the name of the Levant Company. Thenceforward the organisation was of the regulated type and so continued for over two centuries to come. The whole enterprise was a fine example of merchant venturing in unknown conditions, for, strange as it may

seem, there were in 1580 many more English sailors familiar with the Caribbean than with the Mediterranean.¹

In 1579 John Newbery, a merchant of London, made a tour through France to the Mediterranean and so to Tripoli, Jaffa and Jerusalem, whence he returned after 'visiting the monuments of those countries.' He had travelled as a private individual satisfying his own curiosity. In the same capacity he set forth again in 1580 in an English ship sent to the Levant, probably by Osborne and Staper, before the establishment of the Turkey Company. This time he reached Aleppo and thence by the Euphrates passed on to Baghdad and Basra and took ship to Hormuz, the Portuguese factory on the Persian Gulf. Here he stayed some time, learning Arabic and studying the conditions of trade. He returned through southern Persia, hitherto unvisited by Englishmen, and struck westwards through Asia Minor to Constantinople. Thence he made his way across Europe to Danzig and home to London in August 1582. His journey had been a remarkable achievement, but he was yet to do greater things.

The Turkey Company had now been constituted, and its directors took Newbery into their service to lead a far-reaching expedition. At the head of a party of eight he left for Syria in 1583. Two of his companions stayed to open trade at Baghdad, and two at Basra. Newbery with Ralph Fitch and two others then set out for India. At Hormuz the Portuguese arrested them and sent them to the Viceroy at Goa. By the goodwill of Thomas Stevens, an English Jesuit in that city, they were released on bail and began to carry on a trade.

¹ For the foregoing topics see the early chapters of A. C. Wood, *History of the Levant Company*, Oxford, 1935.

But the friendly Jesuits warned them that they were to be sent to Portugal by the first available ship, and three of them therefore made their escape in 1584. They travelled through India and visited the court of the Emperor Akbar, where one, a jeweller, remained in the imperial service. Newbery and Fitch then took different roads, the former to journey homewards by the north-west frontier into Persia, the latter to explore Bengal. At parting Newbery promised Fitch that in two years he would come to Bengal in an English ship to meet him. But Newbery never reached England, and the manner of his end was never known. But for his disappearance the English trade with India might well have begun twenty years before it did, for the Turkey Company was expecting him and was prepared to act upon his report. Ralph Fitch duly traversed Bengal and waited the two years for Newbery's ship. Then he went into Burma and Siam and the Malay countries and back to Bengal. After many adventures and escapes he succeeded in getting home to England by way of Goa, Hormuz and Mesopotamia. He arrived in 1591 after an absence of eight years, to find his death presumed and his will proved by his relatives.¹ His report did not move the Company at once to seek an Indian trade. Times had changed since 1583, England was at war, and Fitch had found the Portuguese indisposed to tolerate Englishmen in the East. As will be explained on a later page, there had been hopes of an understanding with the Portuguese at the date of his setting out, but these had come to nothing. The extraordinary difficulties which he had surmounted did indeed prove that there was no chance of regular trade by the over-

¹ For Newbery and Fitch see Sir W. Foster, *England's Quest of Eastern Trade* (Pioneer Histories, 1933), chaps. vii-ix.

land routes; thenceforward it was accepted that England's way to India was by the sea.

Meanwhile the peril against which statesmen and merchants were working to strengthen their country was developing. At Rome it was called the *empresa*—the enterprise of England—and engaged in it were the Holy See, the Jesuits, King Philip (not with alacrity), the Guises of France, the rebels of Ireland, and a number of English renegades. Just as England had her party for immediate war and her party of postponement, so among her enemies there were two views, some holding that the French and Dutch Protestants must first be overcome and that then the conquest of England would be feasible, others that England was the keystone of heresy whose fall would cause all else to collapse. The latter view was undoubtedly right, but luckily for England the Spanish king was very tardily converted to it. To him, who was to find treasure, fleets and armies, the *empresa* appeared less easy than to the exiles and the priests.

In 1572 Pope Pius V, who had issued the bull of excommunication against Elizabeth, was succeeded by Gregory XIII, who was no less determined to overthrow the Queen and carry the Counter-Reformation to triumph. William Allen had already founded a seminary at Douai for young Englishmen to be trained as missionary priests for the reconversion of their country. They began to enter England in 1574-75 and made much headway in the succeeding years, chiefly in stirring up easy-going Catholics to refuse outward conformity to the Church of England. In 1579-80 their efforts were supplemented by a similar Jesuit mission, organised from Rome by the Pope himself. Both sets of missionaries were ordered to preach nothing but the

faith and to eschew politics. But in practice religion and politics were inseparable, for the bull stood, and every conversion meant a recruit to the belief that Elizabeth was no queen and commanded no allegiance. Thus the English government inevitably regarded the movement as treasonable, and among its loyal subjects the reaction against popery became extreme and long-enduring.

Gregory, moreover, resorted to the secular arm as well as to the spiritual, and thereby ensured martyrdom to any of his missionaries who should be captured. In 1578 he despatched a force of volunteers from Rome under the command of Thomas Stukely with orders to land in Munster and co-ordinate a great Irish rebellion. Stukely turned aside to join King Sebastian of Portugal in his invasion of Morocco, and died with the King on the field of Alcazar. Next year the papal volunteers reached Ireland under new commanders, with Dr. Nicholas Sanders as papal legate. A formidable though local revolt ensued. More Italian and Spanish volunteers landed, but in 1580 the whole expedition was rounded up at Smerwick by Lord Grey, aided by a squadron under Sir William Winter. On surrender, having no commission to show from any sovereign, these unfortunates were put to the sword, as the Englishmen had been in Panama. Afterwards their Irish allies were pitilessly hunted down, and Nicholas Sanders died of hunger whilst 'on the run'. The object had been to make Ireland an English Netherlands; the Counter-Reformation was taking the offensive. Not content with open war, Rome sought to compass assassination, and at the close of 1580 the Pope's secretary wrote officially to an enquirer that to kill 'that guilty woman' would be no sin but a meritorious act. Under such auspices the Jesuits began their spiritual campaign,

their professions betrayed by the men who sent them. Edmund Campion and many others paid the penalty, although he at least could truly say, 'we travelled only for souls'. One can admire his character unreservedly, but his work in its ultimate implications was no task for an Englishman.

Although Spaniards had been among the invaders of Ireland, Philip had shown no enthusiasm. He was intent on a higher game nearer home. The death of Sebastian of Portugal had left an old man of seventy-seven, the Cardinal Henry, as successor. King Henry had no children, and after him came a variety of claimants including Don Antonio the Prior of Crato, the Valois family of France, and Philip II himself. The old king died at the beginning of 1580, and Philip immediately backed his claim with an army under the Duke of Alva and a fleet under the Marquis of Santa Cruz. Don Antonio put up a fight, but had had no time to consolidate his position. He was easily routed, and fled first to France and then to England. By the end of the year Philip was *de facto* King of Portugal and much more formidable to his neighbours on that account. His new dignity gave him the wealth accruing from the monopoly of the Far Eastern trade, the gold and slaves of West Africa, the commerce of Madeira, the Cape Verde Islands and Brazil, and, when he should effectively secure them, the Azores with their strategic importance to the home-coming plate-fleets from the Caribbean. With the crown of Portugal he came also into command of twelve good fighting galleons fit for work in open water, and the numerous seamen of a nation with maritime traditions stronger than those of Spain. This great accession to Spanish strength excited much apprehension in England and brought

war appreciably nearer. Elizabeth's answer was to encourage into new vigour the courtship of the Duke of Anjou, the youngest of the Valois princes, which had been proceeding tentatively for the past two years. She was convinced, and Burghley agreed with her, that England must have allies, although it is not easy to conceive what real assistance they expected to obtain from the shiftiy Catherine de Medici and her completely untrustworthy son Henry III. Philip had already in prospect a much more effective French alliance with the Guises and the ardent Catholic party, who could at least be relied upon to fight in the common cause.

It was at this juncture that Drake sailed into Plymouth, asking if the Queen was alive and well. For him personally the answer was a relief, and the political situation, when he learned it, was equally reassuring. At his last return with Spanish gold in 1573 the talk had been all of peace, and he had been hustled out of sight as a palpable scandal. Now all was different, and for the majority he became at once a national hero who had struck a doughty blow at the forces gathering to dismember England. The acclamation was not unanimous: the City feared an immediate arrest of English goods in Spain; the remnants of the old aristocracy still hated the new age of which Drake was a portent, and hankered after an accommodation with conservative religion; and Burghley gave Mendoza to understand that he disapproved. Perhaps he did, but his policy, as always, was solely dictated by a dispassionate calculation of his country's interest, and much as he might regret Drake's freebooting he would never seek to rend the nation into factions over it.

The circumstance that Don Antonio had a colourable claim to be recognised as King of Portugal pro-

vided material for Elizabethan diplomacy to work upon, and the further circumstance that the Azores declared for him and repudiated Spanish overlordship was full of interest to strategical minds among the Queen's advisers. Nor was this all, for Antonio was confident that the other Portuguese possessions would recognise him and reject Philip, and that with English assistance he might recover the Portuguese empire and ultimately Portugal itself. The price of that assistance would inevitably be the admission of the English to the trade of Africa and the golden East. Enterprising Englishmen were not altogether dismayed by Philip's new acquisition.

Such being the position, Drake was sure of powerful support. Although there was some controversial discussion on the righteousness and expediency of restoring his plunder to Spain, there was probably never the least intention of doing so. The Queen wanted to keep the booty and to keep the peace; Walsingham and Leicester wanted merely to keep the booty. The Queen was successful. She affected irresolution until time enough had elapsed for Spain to become used to the loss and to calculate the disadvantage of war. Then she came out openly on Drake's side. On 4 April 1581 she visited him on board the *Golden Hind* and had him knighted in her presence by the representative of the Duke of Anjou.

To associate the Valois with her decision was a necessary part of her policy. At the time a plan was in preparation for Drake to go with a fighting squadron to the Azores, land some troops to assist the Portuguese at Terceira, and use that port as a base for the interception of the plate-fleet, all in the name of King Antonio. The Queen had consented on two conditions, that Antonio

and the English adventurers should finance the project, and that the French government should take part in it. As a technically privateering venture it might not involve Elizabeth in war with Spain, but she was firm that, if it did, it should involve France also. Ultimately the plan broke down because neither Elizabeth nor Catherine de Medici would trust the other; either lady divined that the other meant to wriggle out of the responsibility and leave her to face the reckoning. Don Antonio pledged a costly diamond ring for his share of the expenses, and some shipping was collected. In June 1581 he came over from France, but without the French adhesion. Walsingham went to France to extort it, and failed. The season slipped away with nothing done, and the plate-fleet came safely home. When all was thus postponed to the following year the unlucky Antonio demanded his diamonds. But the money had been spent on ships, crews and victuals, and the English adventurers contended that the fiasco was no fault of theirs. The expenditure exceeded the value of the diamonds, and in the end Antonio had to lose them while the Queen paid the balance. Cursing English perfidy, he returned to France and threw himself solely on the mercies of Catherine. It was a shabby transaction for which no single party was to blame; the perfidy was collective and inherent in the nature of the combination.

Next year, 1582, Don Antonio went to Terceira with a force of French adventurers led by Philip Strozzi. Spain sent the Marquis of Santa Cruz in pursuit with an armament that was superior, not in the fighting strength of its ships, but because it carried disciplined troops under good officers. Santa Cruz annihilated the French in an action decided by boarding and hand-to-hand conflict. Strozzi and most of his men were killed,

and Antonio escaped once more to England. The immediate result of the victory was that Spain secured the Azores; an ultimate result was that the equipment of the Armada of 1588 was based on the expectation that similar tactics would avail against the English Navy.

Although the Azores had gone to Spain, the English still hoped that something might be done in the other Portuguese possessions, and Drake's visit to the Moluccas was obviously an achievement to be followed up. Before the English expedition to the Azores had fallen through, another was being planned for the Far East. There were two alternative tracks known to be feasible, Drake's route and the Portuguese route round the Cape of Good Hope. If the expedition followed Drake's route it would inevitably attempt another raid on the treasure of Peru—whatever the Queen might command and however sincerely she might mean it, nothing would avail to prevent English crews from seeking another *Cacafuego*, and a repetition of that exploit would mean war. It was therefore determined that the expedition should go by the Cape. The interest in it was widely spread. Soon after his return in 1580 Drake, with the countenance of Walsingham, had petitioned for the incorporation of a company to exploit new trades south of the equator, but this was not proceeded with, for Drake and Walsingham would simply have made war on Spain, and the former was required to lead the projected Azores expedition. Then the backing was made more extensive, and also from the conservative point of view more safe, by the acceptance of investments from the Muscovy Company, Burghley, and a number of noblemen, gentlemen and merchants, of whom the Earl of Leicester contributed over £2000. Drake remained an investor, but the Hawkins brothers

did not participate, being engaged on a venture of their own. In the latter part of 1581 it was decided that Martin Frobisher should command the expedition. The Muscovy Company retained their old grudge against him and insisted on nominating Edward Fenton as second-in-command. Frobisher strongly objected to the choice and withdrew on failing to get it rescinded. Thereupon Fenton was made commander-in-chief.

It is evident that there were too many divergent interests in the management, and the fault was reflected in the personnel of the expedition. Fenton represented the City and was bent simply upon trade with Asia. But Drake and his adherents were probably responsible for securing places for William Hawkins (nephew of John and son of William Hawkins of Plymouth) as second-in-command, and for John Drake as captain of the *Francis*. Both these young men had been circumnavigators in the *Golden Hind*, and for them the true way to the Moluccas was by the Straits and the coast of Peru. No doubt it was foreseen that there would be dissensions, but Fenton was endued with ample authority, including the power to punish with death, and the City had formed an opinion of his leadership which he failed to justify. The original plan had been to visit the Portuguese stations on the coast of India, but news came that they had submitted to Philip II. Fenton therefore sailed in May 1582 with the intention of making directly for the Moluccas to use the trading facilities promised to Drake by the Sultan of Ternate.

With four ships, of which the largest, the *Galleon Leicester*, was of 400 tons, he took the usual course southward to the Cape Verde Islands. Already the crews were demanding to be led to plunder, and the next move was across the line and over to the coast of Brazil

in 28° S. This in itself was not inconsistent with following the instructions, owing to the prevailing winds in the South Atlantic, but there was now open discussion of the Straits of Magellan, which Fenton had been ordered not to traverse. William Hawkins and John Drake headed a faction urging the passage of the Straits with all which that implied. Fenton and others were reluctant, but were rendered irresolute by the doubt whether the victuals would suffice for the long voyage eastwards by the Cape. Fenton's doubts were intensified rather than cleared by a successful action against a Spanish squadron which attacked him in the harbour of St. Vincent on the Brazilian coast. He lost hope of accomplishing his mission, and his quarrels with the Hawkins party grew more violent. At length he solved his problem by shirking it, and turned homeward. He arrived in England in June 1583, a year after he had set out, with William Hawkins a prisoner in irons. John Drake in the *Francis* refused to accept this tame conclusion. He deserted and sailed southwards. Seeking supplies in the River Plate, he lost his ship on a shoal and was eventually captured by the Spaniards. He never returned to England. What the Queen's ministers thought about the failure of this costly expedition is not on record. Fenton was by no means permanently discredited, and it is noteworthy that he was afterwards on excellent terms with John Hawkins, who virtually nominated him to a seat on the Navy Board in 1589.¹

¹ The documents on Fenton's expedition are numerous but difficult. The most important are in the Otho division of the Cotton MSS., the volumes containing them having been partially burnt in such a way that the top and parts of each side of every leaf are missing. To edit and reconstruct these documents in such fashion as to draw all available information from them would be a work of laborious scholarship, and hitherto no one has undertaken it.

Meanwhile John Hawkins and his brother, the elder William Hawkins, had promoted an independent venture. There is among the State papers a draft of a patent for William Hawkins empowering him to make a trading voyage to Africa and America and also to serve Don Antonio, King of Portugal, against his enemies, with the right to sell in England any commodities he might acquire in such service. The draft is undated, and there is no record that it was completed and issued. There is therefore only a probability that it was a preliminary step to the voyage we have now to consider. Before the close of 1582 William Hawkins, in spite of his sixty-three years, sailed from Plymouth in command of seven ships, two of which belonged to Drake. Mendoza reported that he was bound for the Moluccas, a statement that lacks corroboration. Actually Hawkins went first to the Cape Verdes, where at Santiago he suffered a surprise attack by the Portuguese and lost a number of his men. It was one more illustration of the vanity of Antonio's hopes of colonial support. The Portuguese in general disliked Philip II, but preferred him to a refugee allied with English heretics. After this reverse Hawkins crossed to the West Indies and visited Porto Rico, and then tried the pearl fishery at Margarita. The vice-admiral of the squadron was Richard Hawkins, son of John, and it is from a few allusions in his writings that we glean most of what is known of the voyage. He says that the English did not employ divers, but dredged for the oysters in the same manner as in home waters, and that they obtained a good number of pearls. This, however, was only a side-employment while waiting for bigger game. What it was and where encountered we do not know, for all the Hawkinses were very reticent on the affair. But in November 1583 Mendoza wrote

that the adventurers were home with a great booty, not only of pearls but of treasure, hides and sugar, which he believed they had taken from Spanish ships. At the same time a Dutch agent in London reported that the plunder was worth 800,000 crowns. It is possible, of course, that both witnesses were mistaken and that the goods were obtained in trade with the colonists of the Caribbean.

In these years Philip II was working hard to consolidate his extended empire. Apart from the Azores, the Portuguese colonies gave him no trouble, but Oxenham and Drake had compelled him to realise his weakness in the West. By this date it seems that the patrol of the Caribbean coasts was growing effective against the smaller fry of the corsairs and that only strong enemy squadrons had much chance of success. The armed escort of the plate-fleets by the galleons of the Indian Guard was also a real defence. To overcome it regular fighting squadrons would now be necessary, with attendant State interference, publicity and delays. For still greater security Spain was no longer lading the richest treasure in the so-called treasure fleets. She was evolving a new class of swift armed frigates known as *gallixabras*. They were fast enough to run from large enemies and strong enough to beat off small ones, qualities made possible by the fact that the treasure was not a bulky cargo. They sailed independently of the regular convoys, and a good system of dispatch-carrying pinnaces was gradually organised to warn them of dangers.

These measures did much to preserve Philip's Atlantic interests from menaces falling short of national war. But the vulnerability of the Chilean and Peruvian coasts, so brilliantly demonstrated by Drake, was

another matter. They were absolutely unarmed by land and sea, and to build up a completely new system of armaments for their benefit would be costly and difficult. It was characteristic of Spain that she chose the wrong method first. A fighting squadron on the West Coast was the only sound defence, and to that she ultimately came. But first she tried to bar access on military lines by fortifying the Straits of Magellan. It will be remembered that among the Spanish officers who vainly pursued Drake in 1579 was Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa. He was afterwards sent southwards to survey the Straits, of whose geography no exact details were available. Sarmiento stuck closely to an arduous task on the jagged south Chilean coast and in the Straits themselves. He came to the conclusion that the country would support a colony and that by its means the passage could be barred. He continued his voyage on to Spain and made his report to Philip II. The King approved the idea and in 1581 despatched Sarmiento and Diego Flores de Valdes to found the colony. The latter officer, afterwards a feeble counsellor in the command of the Armada, showed a poor spirit on this occasion and turned back, leaving Sarmiento to persist. After long delays and one abortive attempt Sarmiento planted the settlers within the Straits in 1584, although short of necessary supplies. He then set sail for Brazil to represent the needs of the colony. Returning to Spain for the same purpose in 1586, he was captured on the way by an English privateer. The failure of Sarmiento's efforts sealed the fate of the unhappy colony, for he was the only real leader interested in it. Philip, left to himself, simply neglected his southern outpost, and within three years of the start its inhabitants had nearly all perished of hunger and exposure.

In fact there is record of only one man, rescued by Cavendish in 1586, surviving to return to civilisation. In present-day conditions a flourishing community occupies the Straits, but at that time the maintenance of an armed colony would have been more costly in men and shipping than the upkeep of a fighting squadron on the West Coast.¹

In one interesting respect Drake's appearance in the Pacific may have altered the course of history. Mendaña's discovery of the Solomon Islands, with the promise of a continent beyond, had aroused sanguine hopes. Political jealousies in Peru prevented him from immediately following it up, but if the peace of the ocean had remained unbroken it is possible that Spain would in time have continued the project and become the discoverer of Eastern Australia and all the island world of the Western Pacific. After Drake's raid the order was consolidation and abstention from further expansion. It was held that new discoveries in the Pacific would merely benefit the English; and Spain thereby acknowledged that the days of the *conquistadores* were over. Mendaña, it is true, did at length obtain permission to try again in his old age in 1595, but there was no drive behind the effort, and he did not reach the Solomons. The islands gradually disappeared from the maps and were never revisited by Europeans until the eighteenth century.

The probability of war, reluctantly faced by both the English and Spanish governments, grew greater every year. The Anjou courtship came to nothing, but Anjou himself in the guise of Elizabeth's protégé tried to

¹ It is noteworthy that Richard Hakluyt the younger, then beginning his career as a publicist, wrote a pamphlet in 1580 advocating an English colony in the Straits to keep open the gateway into the South Sea.—E. G. R. Taylor, *Late Tudor and Early Stuart Geography*, p. 3.

acquire the sovereignty of the Netherlands in 1581-83. As a soldier he was no match for Philip's viceroy the Prince of Parma, and he died in 1584 after being ignominiously hunted out of his prospective kingdom. On the other side the ardent Catholic forces, Rome, the Jesuits and the Guises, sought always to accomplish the *empresa*. After failing in Ireland they tried in Scotland, with visions of reconstituting the Catholic party and thence attacking England. That also failed, and in 1583 the Duke of Guise and the Jesuits decided upon a direct invasion of England to co-operate with a great rising of the English Catholics. Philip II, as before, was not eager, but Mendoza, like de Spes in 1571, incited the English conspirators and talked of Spanish troops from the Netherlands. Walsingham's agents detected the plan, which is known as Francis Throckmorton's plot. The rack revealed full details, and in January 1584 Mendoza was expelled from England. He had no successor until the reign of James I.

Events in the Netherlands and France were the deciding factor in ending the peace. Parma steadily reconquered cities and broke all resistance but that of the stubborn Dutch of the north. William the Silent fell to an assassin's bullet in 1584. Six months later the Duke of Guise signed a treaty with Philip and took the field at the head of the Holy League to stamp out Protestantism in France. The war of the League eliminated France as a supporter of the Dutch, and in 1585 Elizabeth had at last to choose between seeing them conquered or aiding them herself. Only one decision was possible, for the state of Christendom was now such that the triumph of Spain over her rebels meant the ruin of England. The Queen undertook to defend the United Provinces, and sent over

the Earl of Leicester with an army at the end of the year.

A few months previously hostilities, not necessarily irrevocable, had begun on the sea. Their story will be told in a later chapter. The present one may conclude with an appreciation of the situation by John Hawkins in 1584, the last year of the quasi-peace. Writing to Burghley, he said that although he did not desire war he thought it certain that Spain would take the offensive to destroy the English Church and State. That being so, the Queen should seek to prevent Spain from collecting a naval force sufficient for invasion. It could be done without declaring war by licensing Englishmen to fight against Spain under Don Antonio's flag, and attracting Scots, Huguenots and Dutchmen to join. The combination, which it is implied should take the form of an international company, should have the right to fit out, victual and sell booty in some western English port on payment of a percentage of the spoil to the Queen. The pressure to be applied by the undertaking would impoverish Spain, deprive her of munitions and naval stores, ruin her fisheries by which an invading force would be victualled, excite colonial revolts, and generally make it impossible for Spain to create a fighting fleet. In dealing with costs Hawkins knew what he was talking about, and he declared that even in peace conditions it was three times more expensive to equip ships in Spain than in England, and that under blockade it would be impossible. If the above reasoning was sound, it would not greatly matter whether Spain declared war or not, but Hawkins argued that she probably would rather seek to cajole the Queen to withdraw her countenance from the undertaking in order to gain a breathing-space.

Thus Hawkins elaborated the strategy which he consistently urged throughout the Spanish war. He was never in favour of England spending money and men in continental campaigns. He believed that Philip could be defeated by blockade, which would deprive him of the armaments that could not be manufactured in Spain and of the western treasure upon which his whole European policy was supported. We shall find him advancing the same ideas even more cogently at a later stage.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NORTH AMERICAN PARTY

AT the close of the 1570's the English promoters of expansion began to advocate a project which had hitherto received little attention—the planting of colonies upon the Atlantic coast of North America. John Cabot had discovered that coast in 1497 and had christened it the New Found Land. But Cabot thought it was the coast of Asia, 'the territory of the Grand Khan', and his plan was to exploit the spice trade by the short western route. The hope soon faded, and it was realised that his discovery was a new continent forming a barrier to contact with the East. For three-quarters of a century, from Sebastian Cabot to Martin Frobisher, there were sporadic efforts to circumvent the barrier and discover the North West Passage, but save in one respect North America itself was regarded as a disappointment valueless for its own sake. The exception was in the Newfoundland fishery, frequented almost from the first discovery by Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards and Portuguese.

When the great economic depression of the mid-century had spurred England to initiate a determined expansion overseas, the emphasis had been placed upon new trades, trades with Asia and the tropical Atlantic, 'vents' for English cloth and other manufacturers. So was unemployment and the pressure of population to be remedied at home. Much success had been attained,

and England was a richer country in 1580 than she had been thirty years before. But still the wealth was ill distributed, still honest men starved and predatory beggars roamed, and justice was busy with offenders whose crimes moved humane men to pity. Population, so far as we can discern in the absence of statistics, was still growing at a rate which exceeded the capacity of the social framework to absorb it. Hence a new element was added to the existing motives for expansion, that of emigrating the surplus and finding homes for them beyond the sea; and for that purpose North America with its climate and accessibility was the obvious region. The importance of the new motive must not be exaggerated. It did not predominate, but it took its place with the others, expansion of trade, search for precious metals, discovery of the way to Asia, promotion of sea power, and strategical pressure upon the Spanish treasure-route. But these pointed to other quarters besides North America, and the emigration motive pointed to that continent alone. Thus, considering all together, the statesmanlike mind was strongly drawn to the American project:

‘Truth it is that through our long peace and seldom sickness (two singular blessings of Almighty God) we are grown more populous than ever heretofore: so that now there are of every art and science so many that they can hardly live one by another, nay rather they are ready to eat up one another: yea, many thousands of idle persons are within this realm which, having no way to be set on work, be either mutinous and seek alteration in the state or at least very burdensome to the common wealth, and often fall to pilfering and thieving and other lewdness, whereby all the prisons of the land are daily pestered and stuffed full of them, where either

they pitifully pine away or else at length are miserably hanged, even twenty at a clap out of some one jail: whereas if this voyage were put in execution. . . .¹

North America was for the most part unexplored. Jacques Cartier in the reign of Francis I had penetrated the St. Lawrence estuary, with results very vaguely known in England until 1580, when Hakluyt procured the translation into English of the accounts of two of his voyages. Spaniards had examined Florida and had been disappointed with what they found there. Afterwards the Huguenots had planted on its coast the colony which came to a tragic end at the hands of Menéndez in 1565. John Hawkins, returning from his second West Indian expedition, had visited Florida and passed on to Newfoundland, but he had been short of victuals and had not surveyed the coast between the two regions. Virtually nothing was known of that coast and of the country behind it, and men could still quote no better authority upon it than the maps inspired by the Florentine captain Verazzano, who had made a hasty voyage along it in 1524. The Verazzano maps originated a grotesque fiction on the nature of the continent, namely, that at one point it narrowed to an isthmus a few miles wide, beyond which could be seen the waters of the Pacific almost reaching those of the Atlantic. It is supposed that Verazzano had looked across the isthmus separating Chesapeake Bay from the main ocean, although he had evidently missed seeing the entrance to the bay. For sixty years such was the neglect of further discovery in the region that this great error was reproduced in maps, and the *Mare de Verazzano*

¹ Richard Hakluyt, *Discourse of Western Planting*, Cap. 4. The writer goes on to say that those who should be sent overseas are the floating, semi-criminal population described above, and that their American employments will create new work for the steadier sort at home.

as an arm of the Pacific was one of the attractions beckoning to North America the new school we are now considering.

The only part of the coast at all well known to Englishmen was the east and south-east portion of Newfoundland, used for the salting and drying of the cod caught on the outlying banks. The fishermen were there every year, but even so they learned little of the interior, and to the end of the century it was supposed that Newfoundland was not one island but an archipelago. The fishery, however, was the nucleus from which exploration was to spread. It was exploited as a rule only from May to the middle of August, and consequently those who went there formed an optimistic impression of the average climate of the country; English enquirers had no idea of the severity of the winters, and assumed them to be much the same as at home. With John Hawkins on the voyage above referred to there sailed a Kentish gentleman named Anthony Parkhurst. He afterwards devoted himself to the examination of Newfoundland and made a number of voyages with the fishing fleets, spending his time during the season in observing the fauna and flora and mineral resources of the country. By the date we have now reached he was the leading authority on the subject.

In 1578 Parkhurst wrote two reports on Newfoundland, one of which was addressed to the elder Hakluyt.¹ He described the fishery as a most profitable industry and a promoter of unwonted thrift and morality among

¹ Printed in full in Prof. E. G. R. Taylor's *The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*, Hakluyt Society, 1935, Vol. I, pp. 123-134. This work contains much material hitherto unknown or accessible only in MS., in addition to correct versions of important texts such as *The Discourse of Western Planting*.

the seamen 'for that they find not in this country wine nor women'. Nevertheless, if colonists were established the value of the fishery would be doubled or trebled, for the colonists would make cheap salt on the spot by evaporating sea water with the unlimited fuel from the forests, and would also prepare the drying stages and other apparatus which at present cost the fishermen so much time that their actual fishing was limited to two months; and farther south at Cape Breton the climate would be found as warm as at La Rochelle in France, where the sun's heat was sufficient for salt-making. The colonists would also work the plentiful supplies of iron and copper ore which Parkhurst had noted, with little of the expense for fuel which was already a detriment to the Sussex iron industry. From the forests of Newfoundland they would obtain masts for small ships, and from those of Cape Breton long pine trunks fit for masting the greatest vessels, while everywhere there was water-power for driving the sawmills. In addition to these advantages the food-supply would be easy. Grain and fruits would be freely grown, and the country would breed as vast numbers of cattle and swine as the ranches in the Caribbean which the author had seen on his voyage with Hawkins. And all this in a temperate climate somewhat warmer than that of England, reached by the shortest of all the trans-oceanic voyages:¹ an attractive prospectus.

Such was the state of knowledge when Sir Humphrey Gilbert obtained his patent for colonisation in 1578. As we have seen, he did not at the outset sincerely intend to colonise, but rather to use his privilege as a

¹ Parkhurst does not mention the duration of the voyage, but sixteenth-century records show that it was often made outward with the post-equinoctial east winds in three weeks, and homeward after midsummer in from three weeks to a month.

pretext for raiding the fishery and 'annoying' the King of Spain. His voyage of 1578-79 remains mysterious, although it fairly evidently resulted in more annoyance to himself than to the enemy. Thereafter he turned in good earnest to the task of colonisation and tried with scanty success to raise funds for the purpose. It is necessary to emphasise the fact that although Gilbert is famous for the *Discourse* on the North West Passage, that discovery was not the purpose of the last undertaking of his life, which was primarily devoted to the planting of a colony in the good lands described by Anthony Parkhurst. The patent gave to Gilbert the right to occupy any heathen lands not already in the possession of a European power. In North America this meant any region north of 30° latitude, where the Spaniards had a post in Florida. The patent was valid only for six years from June 1578. By 1582 time was running short, and Gilbert was desperately seeking to raise funds by allotting areas of his prospective possession to sub-patentees who included Dee, Sir Philip Sidney and Sir George Peckham. Sidney was the son-in-law of Walsingham, who had thus a family interest in the project besides the interest which he displayed on public grounds in all plans for expansion. Peckham was a Catholic, or something near it, and meant to use his grant for the founding of a colony of refuge for his co-religionists, just as Lord Baltimore did in Maryland in the following century; and Walsingham, for all his extreme Puritanism, was in sympathy with the idea as providing a safety-valve for discontent at home. The Queen, always Gilbert's friend, wished the enterprise well, although she would spend no public money on it. And so, by various devices, the subscriptions were raised to equip an

adequate expedition for 1583. Already in 1579 there had been a brief reconnaissance of the American coast by Simon Fernandez, a Portuguese pilot in English service, often described as 'Mr. Secretary Walsingham's man'.

The two Richard Hakluyts found this a project after their own hearts.¹ The elder Hakluyt wrote some notes for Gilbert in 1578 on the economic aspects of colonisation and the factors worthy of consideration in choosing a site. These were subsequently published as *Notes framed by a gentleman heretofore to be given to one that prepared for a discovery and went not*, a negative sidelight on the voyage of 1578-79. The notes were full of commonsense suggestions of the mercantilist type of thought, and of details of a wide range of commodities and trades. Meanwhile the younger Hakluyt was at work on the first of those volumes which have given him a great place in English literature and history, the *Divers Voyages touching the Discovery of America*, published in 1582.

Hakluyt addressed the preface of his book to Sir Philip Sidney and emphasised the necessity of 'deducting some colonies of our superfluous people into those temperate and fertile parts of America', and the probability that by that means the western passage to Cathay would be discovered. The body of the work consists of

¹ The only full account of the careers of the two men is in Dr. George Bruner Parks's *Richard Hakluyt and the English Voyages*, New York, 1928. See also Prof. Taylor's *Original Writings, etc., ut supra*. The Hakluyt family was Anglo-Welsh and their name a variant of Ap Cluyd. Here, for the sake of simplicity, we may adopt a convention. The fact that these two contemporaries engaged on similar work were identically named is a nuisance to the writer who would avoid prolixity. Henceforward therefore Richard Hakluyt, barrister of the Middle Temple, will be referred to as the elder Hakluyt, while his more famous cousin Richard Hakluyt of Oxford, clerk in holy orders, will be the younger Hakluyt or Hakluyt without qualification.

the texts of unpublished documents and translations from foreign books. The letters patent granted by Henry VII to John Cabot, with some extracts on the Cabot discovery, are printed to show the English title to North America. Robert Thorne's *Declaration of the Indies*, hitherto existing only in manuscript, is included as a nobly worded exhortation to effort. Then follow the extracts from European authors giving between them a conspectus of the scanty extant knowledge of the American coast and the problem of the Passage. Two maps form the illustrations, one based on that drawn by Robert Thorne in 1527, the other specially prepared by Michael Lok to combine the recent discoveries of Frobisher with the old conception of the Pacific projecting eastwards close to the Atlantic, and to show the colonisable area separating the two oceans. Lok adopted this idea from an old map by Verazzano which he had in his possession. While Hakluyt was preparing this fine piece of publicity, John Dee, who was not given to publication, was drawing up a manuscript statement for the Queen's eye, setting forth her title to North America. Dee, like many men of deep learning, was somewhat lacking in the critical faculty, and he gravely adduced the stories of St. Brandan in the sixth century and Prince Madoc the Welshman in the twelfth side by side with Cabot, Thorne and Frobisher as testimonies of British discovery. But he had drawn to illustrate his argument an excellent map of the North Atlantic which is one of the treasures of the Cotton collection.¹

Thus with the Crown and the court, statesmanship, scholarship and public interest all combining to encourage him, Gilbert made his start in 1583. He sailed from Plymouth on 11 June with five ships and 260 men,

¹ Cotton MSS., Augustus, I. i. r., the first item in the Catalogue.

including all kinds of craftsmen useful in planting a settlement and also 'mineral men and refiners' to detect and assay promising ores. Hakluyt had some desire to see America, but at this time Walsingham had other employment for him, and later in the year sent him to Paris as chaplain to the English embassy, where his duties were not exclusively spiritual. Hakluyt, however, obtained a place in the expedition for a learned observer in the person of his friend Stephen Parmenius of Buda, who was fated not to return.

Insubordination had ruined the chances of Gilbert's previous venture before he had sailed, and the same evil was again apparent. One at least of the captains was faint-hearted, and many of the mariners were Channel pirates impressed as an alternative to standing their trial. Two days out from Plymouth the largest ship, contributed by Walter Raleigh, suddenly deserted and went home, the captain and crew alleging contagious illness and apparently not even giving their commander-in-chief a chance to go on board and see the position for himself. Raleigh, it need hardly be said, was not present in person and was allowed to have spared no expense in fitting the vessel out.

After this serious loss Gilbert made a tedious passage of seven weeks and sighted Newfoundland on 30 July. He had not yet determined where to plant the colony, but it seems that he favoured the region to the south of Newfoundland. However, his patent covered all, and on 5 August he formally took possession at St. John's in the presence of the fishermen of various nationalities. His German assayer collected samples of ores, declaring that he had found silver as well as iron. Gilbert professed high hopes of the silver, and said that he would have gone no farther but that it was necessary to stake out as

large a claim as possible before the patent expired. One of his ships, the *Swallow*, had parted company in a fog, and when she reappeared her pirate crew were found to have robbed a fishing vessel. At the same time many men were sick and eager to go home. Gilbert therefore got rid of the *Swallow* by sending her back to England with the unfit. Then with three ships, the *Delight* of 120 tons, the *Golden Hind* (not Drake's) of 40 tons, and the *Squirrel* of 10 tons, he continued southwards towards Cape Breton. At some spot not exactly identifiable because reckoning had been lost in foul weather the *Delight* ran on a shoal and broke up, and all but a handful of her hundred men were drowned. In her were lost the unlucky Stephen Parmenius and all the prospective colonists, together with the assayer and his precious ores. Gilbert was in the *Squirrel* at the time. There was nothing for it but to return to England. He professed himself not to be disheartened, and declared that the news he had for the Queen would move her to advance £10,000 and set forward the project royally next spring. He was counting on the silver, of which, however, he had lost the evidence.

On the homeward voyage Gilbert remained in the *Squirrel*. Her ten tons represent fifteen or twenty of modern reckoning, but she was overweighted with guns and superstructures and considered unfit for the autumn voyage. Gilbert was urged to transfer to the *Golden Hind*, but preferred to share the *Squirrel's* chances with her crew. In mid-ocean, north of the Azores, she was seen to be almost overwhelmed in a dangerous sea. The *Golden Hind* sailed close, and Gilbert, sitting aft with a book in his hand, uttered one of those phrases that in the hour of death have rendered so many of his time immortal: 'We are as near

to Heaven by sea as by land!' That night suddenly the *Squirrel's* lights went out, and the *Golden Hind's* people knew that she was gone. Edward Haie, captain and owner of the *Golden Hind*, who tells the story in one of the finest pieces of unaffected prose in Hakluyt's collection, admired Gilbert as a fearless knight and Christian gentleman. There were harsh and even brutal passages in his hero's earlier career, but Haie is a good witness for the last months, and his account rings true. Haie was an honest detester of piracy, and waxed eloquent on the judgment of God upon the *Swallow's* robbing of the poor fishermen. He did not know that Gilbert had meditated the same action on a greater scale five years before. We may believe that Gilbert himself had renounced that iniquity, for there is no doubt that he was bent solely upon honest effort at the end.

Into Gilbert's place stepped Walter Raleigh his half-brother, born of the same mother, all of whose five sons were notable men. Raleigh, just over thirty years of age, had been a soldier since he was sixteen, fighting first under Coligny in France and then for several campaigns in the Irish wars. There, in many hardy exploits, he won the reputation of a fearless captain, but never showed that he had the makings of a general. With all his capacity for practical work in a skirmish he lacked the higher sense of realities that raises men to ascendancy in council. Superiors hated him for his independence but did not say of him as of the young Napoleon, 'We must advance this man or he will advance himself'; they sought to suppress him. They would probably have done so if he had remained a captain in the wars. But there were other sides of Raleigh's life and other qualities by which he could rise.

In the intervals of soldiering he had been a member of the University of Oxford and of the Inns of Court. He read everything and wrote poetry as well as criticisms of Irish policy. He knew great men at court and in the Council. He joined in Gilbert's project and commanded a ship under him in 1578. About the end of 1581 he came under the Queen's eye and charmed her by his gallant bearing and brilliant mind. Thenceforward he grew rich with leases, monopolies and sinecures, those courtiers' rewards which were so disproportionate to the pay of the men who did the Queen's real work. Raleigh had found his path to the top, but he always hated it and hankered after the life of action that was now for many of his best years denied him. All he could do was to send other men to action, and the American plans gave him his first opportunity.

He had not long to wait for it. Gilbert's death gave his sub-patentees the right to act upon his patent, if they could do so before it expired. In the winter of 1583-84 Sir George Peckham tried to arrange for a new expedition, to be led by Walsingham's stepson Captain Christopher Carleill. But the move came to nothing, and by the spring it was evident that the Gilbert patent was dead, for it was impossible that a settlement could be actually planted before 11 June. Raleigh desired to have the leadership without encumbrance from the wrecks of Gilbert's commitments, and therefore moved for an entirely new grant for himself. He obtained it on 25 March 1584, framed in generally similar terms to that of Gilbert and with the same six years' limitation. He was already preparing to act upon it, and a month after the official sealing of the instrument his preliminary expedition set sail. We have no record of ill-will between him and the persons whom he

superseded. Walsingham was favourable to his project, and the Hakluyts gave it their allegiance and support. If Peckham and his friends had chosen to be obstructive, they might have caused a year's delay by protesting against the issue of Raleigh's patent before their own had legally expired; but we hear nothing of any such action. The North American projectors as a whole displayed a public spirit not always predominant in other departments of Elizabethan enterprise.

Raleigh's purpose was to examine the coasts to the southward of the region visited by Gilbert. War with Spain was growing more likely, and a colony in the latitude and presumably the climate of Andalusia would yield those commodities which Englishmen would no longer obtain from Seville when hostilities should have broken out. In addition the more southerly site would provide a base of attack upon the Spanish merchant fleets debouching from the Florida Channel, as the Frenchmen had calculated twenty years before. Accordingly Raleigh's captains, Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlow, with Simon Fernandez the Portuguese pilot, took the trade-wind track by the Canaries and the West Indies and then turned northwards with the Gulf Stream, closing the unknown continent as they did so. On 2 July they smelt the land, and two days later they saw it. They coasted north for 120 miles and at length found themselves in the archipelago of low-lying islands fringing what is now North Carolina.

Vegetation, animals and climate all delighted them, giving promise of a lucrative colony in which foodstuffs and merchandise would virtually grow themselves. Above all, the people were generous, frank and honourable in their dealings, welcoming the white men as distinguished guests. 'We found the people most gentle,

loving and faithful, void of all guile and treason, and such as live after the manner of the golden age. . . . A more kind and loving people there cannot be found in the world.' The Englishmen acted conformably, and there were no regrettable incidents. The narrator has left no more delightful picture than that of the exploring party arriving wet and miry at a village and being mothered by the chieftain's wife: 'She caused us to sit down by a great fire, and after took off our clothes and washed them and dried them again: some of the women plucked off our stockings and washed them, some washed our feet in warm water, and she herself took great pains to see all things ordered in the best manner she could, making great haste to dress some meat for us to eat. After we had thus dried ourselves she brought us into the inner room, where she set on the board standing along the house some wheat like furmenty, sodden venison and roasted, fish sodden, boiled and roasted, melons raw and sodden, roots of divers kinds, and divers fruits.' And when some Indians returned from hunting with weapons in their hands, causing a momentary glance of alarm among the English, 'she was very much moved and caused some of her men to run out and take away their bows and arrows and break them, and withal beat the poor fellows out of the gate again'.

It was a midsummer idyll of peace and plenty, destined soon to fade. No Englishman of that time could understand the difference between being entertained for a few days by a simple folk and residing permanently among them to establish a polity which would destroy their way of life and reduce them to hatred and despair. Amadas and Barlow meant and acted well, with no suspicion that they were the advanced guard of

death to the red man. They departed with their welcome still warm and were home with their report in September. Raleigh, with his supreme gift for the fortunate word, entitled their discovery Virginia.

Meanwhile statesmanship was busy with America, not as an unsophisticated Utopia but as a problem of profit and power. Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages* had been raw material. Raleigh now set him to think it together and produce a programme. The result was the *Discourse of Western Planting*, written while Amadas was at sea and quickly rounded off within a few days of his return. Unlike Hakluyt's other important works, the *Discourse* was not intended for publication and was in fact never published until the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was the declaration of a policy recommended for the Queen's adoption, and so was regarded as a confidential document, just as a parallel composition would be in our own day. Apart from its explicit proposals it is interesting as showing the state of feeling towards Spain twelve months before war began. Hakluyt was a parson belonging to the middle section of the Church of England, by no means an extremist of the Puritan type, and as a responsible man he was writing for the eye of a sovereign who was known to have no patience with fanaticism. Yet in page after page his hatred of Spain and Rome burns unrestrained, and throughout he takes it for granted that England cannot avoid a struggle to the death with the Counter-Reformation and its greatest monarch. Very significant, when addressed to such a stickler for forms of respect as Elizabeth, is the liberty he allows himself in alluding not to 'the King of Spain' but more commonly to 'this Philip'. In effect his *Discourse* is not only an economic programme for increasing English wealth but a strategical advocacy of

expansion as a means to victory in the inevitable war. Hakluyt had the outlook of an average man, and we may believe that his pugnacity was that of the average Englishman in 1584.

The *Discourse* is an exhaustive document. In Professor Taylor's recent edition it occupies 116 pages of print. Yet there is in its considerations little that is not to be found in other writings of the time. It is a cogent welding together of all the motives for American colonisation which have already been noticed in this chapter, and their reinforcement by as many detailed facts as the author could collect. For the forcefulness of the argument and the amplitude of detail Hakluyt can claim the credit, but the economic and strategic ideas were common to many minds, and it would be misleading to acclaim him as their originator. The *Discourse*, however, contains one feature that is lacking in previous declarations of policy, namely, an insistence that colonisation is a work needing the whole strength of the nation and that the Queen herself should take the lead in it. Whether this emphasis upon the need for a national effort was Hakluyt's, Raleigh's or Walsingham's, it was novel and well justified. The subsequent outbreak of war deprived it of any chance of bearing fruit.

Hakluyt's work earned the Queen's favour and a clerical preferment. He had written the *Discourse* while on leave in England, and soon after presenting it he returned to his chaplaincy at Paris. There he collected foreign writings not accessible at home, picked the brains of French geographers, merchants and sea-captains, and sought to learn the secrets of the East from the Portuguese refugees who clung to Don Antonio. The energy which he displayed in the ensuing

five years was remarkable, as was to be shown in his next great work in 1589.

Meanwhile Raleigh continued the colonial enterprise. He was unable to leave England in person, and appointed Sir Richard Grenville to lead the expedition which should plant the first Virginian settlement. In April 1585 Grenville sailed with seven ships. With him were Ralph Lane, who was to stay in the colony as its permanent governor; Philip Amadas, appointed admiral of the American coast; Thomas Cavendish, subsequently to win fame as a circumnavigator; Thomas Hariot, the greatest mathematician of Elizabethan England, who went as a scientific observer and afterwards wrote a well-balanced account of Virginia; and many other gentlemen-adventurers besides the crews, and colonists to the number of a hundred. Grenville proceeded in leisurely fashion by way of the West Indies, where he landed and stayed some time in Porto Rico and on the northern coast of Hispaniola. He was not a man of dilatory nature, and it can only be supposed that he was making a reconnaissance of the Spanish islands with a view to the approaching war. He was careful to protect his shore parties with entrenchments, but there were no hostilities. He had more or less friendly communication with the Spaniards and learned a good deal about the strength and condition of the colonies. Lane, who disliked Grenville, afterwards complained that the time thus spent was to the detriment of the fortunes of the Virginian settlement; but there is no doubt that in the minds of Raleigh and the other promoters Virginia and the Antilles were aspects of the same undertaking.

Towards the end of June the expedition arrived on the American coast, and its members landed first at the

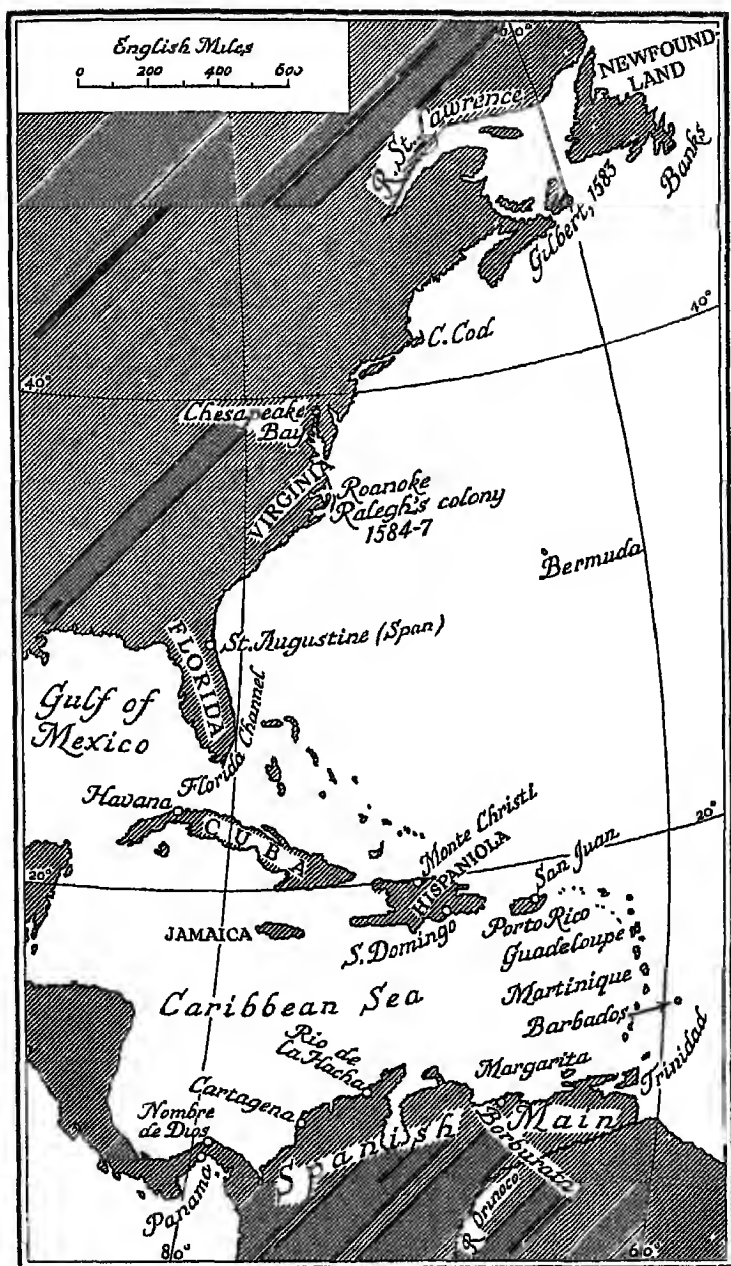
island of Wokokon. Grenville and other leaders went across the shallow sound to explore the mainland, while the colonists established themselves at Roanoke, the island on which Amadas had been so well received in the previous year. Grenville did not maintain the 'loving' relations with the Indians of the mainland, where he burned a village on failing to obtain restitution of a silver cup stolen by one of the savages. Few captains of that time would have acted otherwise, although one may believe that Raleigh would have been one of the few. It is possible to exaggerate the importance of the incident as a cause of the subsequent failure of the colony, for the Indians of Roanoke were a tribe distinct from those of the mainland and were frequently at war with them. The burning of the village would not have seemed a very shocking deed to the Roanoke Indians, who had in fact asked Amadas on his first visit to give military aid against the mainland enemy. The most that can be said is that Grenville missed a chance of impressing the savage mind with the ethics which English civilisation did not conspicuously develop until two centuries after his time. He had, however, to meet a charge of harshness from his own people. Ralph Lane wrote home to Raleigh and Walsingham complaining of his leader's tyranny, pride and hard dealing with all the gentlemen of the expedition. The letter has been preserved among the state papers. In the documents afterwards published by Richard Hakluyt there is no hint of dissensions, and it is fairly evident that for public reasons any such references were carefully expunged. What Grenville's tyranny amounted to we do not know. Lane gives no details, and no rejoinder from Grenville is on record. The recent undertakings of Edward Fenton and Sir Humphrey Gilbert had failed mainly through lack of

discipline. Sixteenth-century gentlemen at sea strongly objected to discipline when applied to themselves, and if any defence of Grenville is possible against so nebulous an attack, it must be that he did conduct his expedition without mishap to its goal and there settle the colonists according to the plan determined.

Grenville departed with the shipping at the close of August, and captured a richly laden Spaniard on his way home. It had been agreed that he should return in April of the following year with reinforcements and supplies, and that in the meantime Lane should govern the colony.

What kind of leader Lane was cannot clearly be determined, for we have only his description from his own pen. Reading between the lines of his account of the following year's proceedings, it is possible to glean the impression of a slow-minded conscientious man, lacking any spark of genius to compensate for his ignorance of the task before him, and lacking the magnetism of a Drake or even the dour discipline of a Grenville to keep his people to their duty. Lane, it would seem, did nothing disgraceful or exceptionable, and failed to make the colony a success; and the circumstances were such that for a mediocrity to fail was not discreditable.

Friendship with the Indians and reliance upon them for foodstuffs was a cardinal factor in the plan, and yet everyone was completely ignorant of the Indians' way of thought and way of life. The pioneer party of 1584, so delighted with their reception, had not realised that the hospitality of the red men was largely due to superstitious awe, to a notion that the white visitors were dead men returned to life, a basis of friendship that was bound to suffer erosion on a protracted acquaintance. Then also the plentifulness of foodstuffs had been



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deceptive. The Indian at harvest time gorged happily and gave generously, but he did not store; at other seasons he lived precariously on game and shellfish and had nothing to spare. From this false assumption on the food question proceeded another error, certain if unremedied to preclude success. The English were organised and thought of themselves as an expedition, not as a colony in the true sense of the word. They did not expect that for years to come their utmost efforts would be needed in establishing an economy in which they themselves would grow their corn and produce all the profitable goods for export. Here the foresight of the Hakluyts and the other promoters had not gone far enough. Their programmes had talked largely of men being 'set on work' at these things, but they had not said how it was to be done. The only possible way was by the immediate establishment of a society of farmers and labourers, master-craftsmen and journeymen, with landowners and legislators to give a binding to the whole. The adventurers of 1585 were not a society and could not easily become one. They were officers and other ranks, looking for their rations to the commissariat and acting only on the command of their superiors. They could, so long as manna descended, mount guard at stockades and make explorations into the unknown and even barter for wares with the natives, but they were not even the beginnings of a colony. Lastly, if they were to persist as a garrison, sea-communication with England was essential; and on this consideration they had made a bad geographical choice of a site. The anchorage, so pleasant in fine weather, turned out to be untenable in bad; and contact with the mainland and its resources was dangerous owing to the shoals and squalls of the intervening sound, where open

boats could alone be used and might be overwhelmed without warning.

Lane was not long in discovering that the Indians could not be relied upon for food and that the site of the settlement had serious drawbacks. He did not and probably could not seek to reorganise his party as an agricultural society. Only in the next century after bitter experience was it recognised that a military force could not grow crops and that individual properties were the basis of a successful colony.¹ For him the only course was to hold out as best he could until Grenville should return with supplies, and meanwhile to explore the country and cajole or threaten the Indians into giving as much food as possible. In exploration his most useful achievement was to learn of Chesapeake Bay and its advantages, although he did not actually reach it; and this information was acted on in the permanent founding of Virginia twenty years later.

No one can be blamed for the disillusionment and growing hostility of the Indians, which were inherent in the situation. From drawing aloof in order to starve out the intruders the natives proceeded to plan attacks and massacre, and Lane was obliged to fight them and kill several. The return of Grenville in April 1586 was eagerly awaited, and he did not come, while the next harvest was still many weeks ahead. Early in June, however, a great fleet approached the coast. It was Drake sailing home after the first campaign of the Spanish war, in which he had raided the colonies of the Caribbean. Drake did his best for Lane's command, allotting them a good ship and supplies of all kinds. A gale then drove the ship out to sea and revealed the

¹ Compare the tragic record of Virginia for several years from 1607 with the immediate success of Maryland planted in 1634.

dangers of the Roanoke anchorage. Drake's people murmured over the perilous delay on a business which they held to be none of theirs, and the upshot was that Lane's party lost heart and took passage home with Drake. Less than a fortnight afterwards Grenville arrived with three ships and ample stores provided by Raleigh. He found the colony deserted, left fifteen men to maintain possession, and consoled himself by a vigorous plundering of the Azores on his way home. Drake had acted in good faith and had done what seemed best for all concerned, but his intervention had been unfortunate, and the fact that he had frustrated Grenville's plans for the second time could not have improved their mutual relations.

Virginia was thus abandoned save for Grenville's fifteen men, who in fact were never seen alive again. The rights were still Raleigh's, but he had spent all he could afford on the project. Whether, as he claimed, his outlay amounted to £40,000 is doubtful, for the sum appears excessive in view of what is known of the cost of other maritime expeditions, and as a set-off he had a share of the booty taken by Grenville on two occasions. But the prospective expenditure was heavy for any individual, and the chances of profit small. The next step was therefore the leasing of the rights for a limited area to a syndicate of sub-patentees styled the Governor and Assistants of the City of Raleigh, the city to be planted on the Island of Roanoke.¹ The governor was John White, who had been a member of the first expedition, and Ralph Lane took no further part in the affair. It would seem, from references to land-grants

¹ *Cambridge Hist. of British Empire*, I, p. 71. Other authorities describe Raleigh as financing the second colony, as is stated in narratives printed by Hakluyt.

being made to individuals, that the organisation was intended to be more that of a colony and less that of a field-force than on the previous occasion, an impression that is strengthened by the men being described as planters and by the emigration of a number of women and children in their company.

After an uneventful voyage White reached Virginia in July 1587. He learned that the fifteen men at Roanoke had been killed by the Indians. He had himself some minor hostilities with them, but also some success in establishing better relations. He and his leading men were all keen to remain and plant a real settlement, but they agreed on the necessity of sending home some spokesman of weight to ensure that further necessary stores should be sent out. None of the twelve assistants was willing to go, all preferring to stay and look after their interests in the colony. Finally White himself, much against his inclination, was persuaded to return with the ships and organise a new 'supply' for the following year. He left in the colony his own equipment as a planter and his daughter, married to a settler named Ananias Dare, and furthermore a granddaughter born at Roanoke on 18 August and appropriately christened Virginia Dare.

This second colony promised better than the first, but the end was tragedy. White reached England in November, and with Raleigh's support equipped a fleet to be led by Sir Richard Grenville in the following spring. But 1588 was the Armada year, and at the last moment ships and men were impressed for the national defence. White, desperately anxious to keep touch with Virginia, obtained permission to take two small vessels, but both crews repudiated their mission and went cruising for prizes instead. In 1589 Drake's Portugal

expedition absorbed all shipping, and Raleigh severed his connection with Virginia by making over the whole of his rights to a company which could do nothing effective for years to come. At length in 1591 White reached Roanoke with an unwilling crew whose hearts were set on privateering. The fort was untenanted, but the signs indicated that the colonists had peaceably removed to the mainland. Why they did so and what became of them are unknown. No certain or probable news was ever learned,¹ for White's crew in 1591 refused to investigate further, and it was many years before any other English vessel visited the coast. Raleigh cannot be acquitted of a certain heartlessness. He was financially embarrassed, it is true, but his finances were on a great scale, and the cost of a pinnace under a trusty captain to clear up the fate of the lost colonists would have meant little to him. In after years when he had become interested in Guiana, he was able, even when a prisoner in the Tower, to send out vessels to explore its coasts.

In the minds of the promoters of expansion North America had always had a double interest, that of colonisation and that of its position athwart the western road to Asia. After Gilbert's death Raleigh had taken up colonisation, with Asia as an ultimate possibility, while others pursued the immediate search for the North West Passage. These others were Adrian Gilbert, brother of Sir Humphrey; William Sanderson, a London merchant whose wife was a niece of Gilbert and Raleigh; and John Davis, a Dartmouth sea-captain; and they were aided at court by Raleigh, Walsingham and Dee, although the latter's influence was lost when

¹ For a full treatment of the mystery see Hamilton McMillan, *Sir Walter Raleigh's Lost Colony*, Raleigh, N.C., 1907.

he set forth in the autumn of 1583 on a prolonged continental journey in search of scientific knowledge. As a result Adrian Gilbert obtained a patent in 1585, conferring upon him and his associates the right to search for a northern passage to Asia and to enjoy the monopoly of the trade which should ensue. William Sander-son supplied most of the necessary money, and John Davis undertook the command of the expedition.

Those who know the unhampered approach to Dartmouth and the roomy anchorage within, secure from every storm and defensible against any foe, may perhaps speculate on the reasons why it missed its possible geographical destiny as the premier seaport of the southwest, while Plymouth took its place. The explanation lies probably in the accident of personality. Plymouth rose from a minor position at the opening of the Tudor period mainly by the enterprise of two generations of the Hawkins family, attracting that of the gentry of its hinterland and followed by the magnetic genius of Drake. The Dart harboured no such galaxy of business talent. Yet it produced in John Davis one of the finest seamen of his time, unsurpassed in character and professional ability, but not of the type to make money or boom his native port. Davis was a scientific navigator who clearly advanced the practice of his science, a commander of steady purpose who never faltered in the utmost disaster, and a humane and honest man with none of the common piratical background, a man in the line of Richard Chancellor and James Cook, whose reputation has been thrust into the shade by the brilliance of so many of his contemporaries.

In June 1585 Davis sailed from Dartmouth with two small vessels and coasted western Greenland to about 64°. Thence he passed north-westwards over

open sea until he came to what is now Baffin Land (Frobisher's Meta Incognita) in $66\frac{2}{3}^{\circ}$. In examining this coast he found Cumberland Sound running parallel with but north of Frobisher's Strait, and believed that it might be one of the passages between the broken lands of the north. But the season was late and the wind contrary, and he returned to Dartmouth at the close of summer. Next year he sailed a month earlier for Cumberland Sound, but bad weather prevented a full examination and forced him southwards. He noted the promising aspect of the entrance to Hudson's Strait (Frobisher's Mistaken Straits), and returned by Labrador and Newfoundland. Funds were now running low, but in 1587 he left Dartmouth once more to complete the discovery with a 20-ton pinnace. Two other vessels were in company, but they were intended to fish with a view to clearing the expenses. With his pinnace leaking to the extent of three hundred strokes a watch, Davis reached the record latitude of 73° between Baffin Land and Greenland, and saw the sea extending north-westwards clear and free from ice. But a hard wind drove him back, and although he beat to and fro until provisions were almost done he never regained his former latitude. The wind, however, was an incident; the open water in the desired direction was the promising factor. On his return he wrote to Sanderson: 'I have been in 73 degrees, finding the sea all open, and forty leagues between land and land. The passage is most probable, the execution easy.'

That was all. There was no more money, and war-clouds overspread the sky. Next year he sailed from Dartmouth, but it was to fight the Armada, and he was never again in the North West. In his three ill-provided expeditions Davis had done more for geography than

any of his predecessors. Amid the perplexities of a wildly varying compass and a sun that circled the horizon and veiled the pole star his scientific navigation enabled him to keep record of his positions. He thus established the correct relationship of Greenland to America, a thing that Frobisher had left in doubt. His name is commemorated in Davis Strait, but characteristically the honour understates his achievement, for his farthest north was well up in Baffin Bay, named after an explorer of the following century. In his own time his were the last north-western voyages.

CHAPTER XIV

HAWKINS AND THE NAVY

THE talents of the late Sir Julian Corbett have concentrated attention upon Drake's handling of the English fleet as the outstanding interest of the story of the Spanish War. It should not be forgotten, however, that but for the antecedent labours of John Hawkins there would have been no fleet for Drake and others to handle, no fleet, that is to say, capable of the uses to which they put it, but only an inadequate number of decayed and obsolete ships, as poor in quality and equipment as those in which King Philip sent his gallant men to give away their lives. By those whose delight is solely in naval actions the ships themselves and all that stood behind them are taken for granted. In fact they were the fruit of a stout man's single-handed fight against obstruction, corruption and calumny, and the story of that fight is as worthy of record as the story of Drake at Cadiz.

To consider what Hawkins did, we must hark back to the previous generation. Henry VIII developed the Navy from small beginnings to a strength of fifty-three sail, many of them large and powerful ships. It is believed to have been his personal initiative that began the policy of using heavy guns and seeking victory by battering and sinking the enemy instead of boarding and capturing him. That change had great significance, for in the outcome it meant that sea fights would be

won by sailors rather than soldiers. In the new method the favourable positions for concentrating gunfire upon the foe would be attained by skilful seamanship, whereas in the old the mariners had only to sail their vessels into an indiscriminate mêlée which the soldiers decided by an assault resembling that of a castle on land. At the beginning of Henry's reign there were more soldiers than sailors in his fleets, but at the end the proportion was reversed, and the change was setting in by which the 'army by sea' (the old term) became a genuine navy of the modern sort. By the date of the Armada the change in England was complete, although it had scarcely begun in Spain.

Apart from the question of gunnery there is no doubt that Henry devoted much thought and supervision to his fleet. He understood that behind the efficient line of battle must stand the dockyards and a skilled administration. He developed Portsmouth into a fortified base whose facilities grew with the growing numbers of his ships. But Portsmouth, although well placed for an attack on the French, was also exposed to attack by them. In those days expense precluded the keeping of ships in commission a day longer than was necessary, and there was always the possibility that the French would steal a march and find the English fleet unrigged and unmanned. Henry therefore established other dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford on the Thames, whose difficult estuary made a surprise raid very unlikely. Still more important was his work of organisation. At the outset his handful of vessels were supervised in peace time by the Clerk of the Ships, and only in war did the Lord Admiral have anything to do with them. As the fleet grew the Clerk's duties became more onerous, but Henry found in William Gonson a man

of extraordinary ability who coped with the task for more than twenty years. Gonson died in 1545, when the Navy was larger than ever and engaged in war with France. Henry saw that the work was more than one man could do, and inaugurated the Navy Board, the administrative body that continued to function throughout the Elizabethan period. The Navy Board consisted of the Treasurer of the Navy, the Comptroller of the Ships, the Surveyor of the Ships, the Master of the Ordnance for the Ships, and the Clerk of the Ships. These officers divided between them the work of administration and were responsible to the Lord Admiral, who was always a Privy Councillor and one of the great ministers of State. The members of the Navy Board were in theory all of equal standing. For a time they were subordinate to the Lieutenant of the Admiralty, a working deputy of the Lord Admiral, but this office failed to take root, and in Elizabeth's reign the Treasurer, responsible for the accounts, became tacitly recognised as head of the Board.

Henry died in 1547, and his successors, the Protector Somerset and the Duke of Northumberland, were left to carry on the work. In 1550 they created another office, that of Surveyor of the Victuals for the Seas, and another dockyard at Chatham on the Medway, which speedily became the principal establishment of all, since it shared the security of the Thames and offered better facilities for mooring and docking the great ships. These two reforms were due principally to Northumberland, whom we have already seen doing good work in organising the revival of overseas trade. Northumberland had been Lord Admiral during Henry VIII's last and greatest war, and had a thorough knowledge of the Navy's needs. But his sound ideas were

more than counter-balanced by the greed and corruption that characterised the decade following Henry's death, and the reigns of Edward VI and Mary were destined to be the blackest period in the history of the Tudor Navy.

In the maintenance of the fleet both negligence and fraud were more possible on an extensive scale and more difficult to detect in time of peace than in any other department of the State. In default of unremitting work and expenditure the ships decayed rapidly. The great vessels were left in the charge of a few shipkeepers. Damp and mould attacked the solid timbers and rotted them to touchwood; ironwork rusted away; canvas, cordage and cables mildewed and perished in the storehouses. To combat these evils was a highly technical task for conscientious officials with a great knowledge of their business, and the workmen under their control needed the spur of superiors with a strong sense of duty; for it was possible for half-a-dozen idle shipwrights to ruin a great ship by negligent work. Then also there was constant need for the purchase of materials whose quality was vital and could be judged only by experts—a ship repaired with unseasoned timber might rot into uselessness in two or three years. These things invited collusion and peculation, the extent of which the statesmen had no means of judging until it was exposed by the test of war. The only defence was for a government which itself maintained a high standard of probity to appoint a Navy Board of proved character and competence, and then for ministers to supervise it with all the vigilance of which they were capable.

Such conditions did not prevail after the death of Henry VIII. Both Somerset and Northumberland precariously maintained their ascendancy by permitting

corruption throughout the State. Their supporters scrambled for influence, jobs and loot. All England deteriorated, and its Navy most of all. The government satisfying its harpies could not find the money necessary for the fleet, and the money that was allowed was dissipated in the undisciplined jobbery of the dockyards. With the fall of Northumberland and the accession of Mary a better tone is observable in State circles. But religion was almost the sole interest of the Queen, ecclesiastics predominated in her councils, and the Spanish influence of Philip was more concerned with expending than with husbanding the resources of England. Thus the Navy continued to be neglected, and there was no recovery until the last months of the Queen's life, when the disgrace of Calais evoked a belated determination to reform. Few details of the jobbery that consumed the fleet have survived, but we know its results. In the eleven years 1547-58 the ships decreased from fifty-three to twenty-six and the total tonnage from 11,268 to 7110. The latter figure is increased by the fact that some new vessels were bought or built after the loss of Calais; in 1557 it would have been lower. The disappearance of nearly 40 per cent of Henry's tonnage was not mainly due to the fact that the government refused to replace old ships. The majority of the vanished vessels were new ones, built in the last years of Henry's reign. When, for example, the *Grand Mistress* of 450 tons, built in 1545, was sold for £35 ten years later, it was either a scandalous job or an example of utter neglect; and there were smaller craft sold for £8 and £10 each. Of those that remained many were unable to put to sea, as was shown by the fall of Calais, which fortress might have been relieved if Henry's customary winter squadron had been sent out to keep command of

the Narrow Seas.¹ The pride of the fleet, the 1000-ton *Great Harry*, was accidentally burnt in 1553 and not replaced; while we have seen in a previous chapter that the 700-ton *Jesus of Lubeck* was condemned as beyond repair at the opening of Elizabeth's reign, although Hawkins to his sorrow was tempted to charter her. Altogether it makes a sad story.

Of the next twenty years, from 1558 to 1578, the record is a little better but not very good. Elizabeth and Cecil, struggling to emerge from the bankruptcy which they inherited, could not afford large expenditure upon the fleet, and they accepted the lower numbers to which the previous reigns had reduced it. Their policy was defensible on the score of the weakening of France, where the civil wars first neutralised and then almost destroyed the State navy which Francis I had made so formidable. Elizabeth's fleet at half the strength of her father's was in fact adequate to its duties until the Spanish menace loomed up at the close of the 1570's. It would not have been so without an improvement in quality. The new building programme of Mary's last year was continued by her successor, and in the first period of the reign five great ships of over 600 tons and about half a dozen of over 200 tons were added to the Navy to replace the condemned wrecks of the preceding régime. While the net increase in tonnage was little or none, the small fleet was no longer a paper one, but capable of service.

In the efficiency of the administration and the dock-yard work there was undoubtedly an improvement, for in these years the Elizabethan squadrons did get

One might go further and say that Calais would not have been attacked, for the Duke of Guise counted upon command of the sea, and a French blockading squadron took part in the siege.

promptly to sea and do their work when required. Yet the honesty of the same services left much to be desired, and the curious position was that the Navy Board was moderately efficient and at the same time corrupt. The Queen's work was done, but it was done at an excessive cost; and the surplus went into the pockets of a group of officials. When we consider the financial vigilance of Elizabeth and her chief minister, this extensive speculation shows how difficult it was for laymen to supervise naval experts who could enshroud their ill-doings in a cloud of technicalities. This brings us to the personnel of the Navy Board, which remained almost unchanged for the first twenty years of the reign; there was in fact no new appointment from 1561 to 1578. During that period Benjamin Gonson, son of Henry VIII's servant, was Treasurer of the Navy, Sir William Winter was both Master of the Ordnance and Surveyor of the Ships, his brother George Winter was Clerk of the Ships, and William Holstocke was Comptroller. The Winters thus filled three of the five seats on the Board,¹ and they were experienced sea-captains as well as officials. Very little is known of Holstocke, who is a name rather than a personality in the records, except that he was also a sea officer, for on one occasion we find him in command of a squadron to suppress piracy. Benjamin Gonson was a landsman of mercantile training. It no doubt qualified him to keep the accounts as Treasurer but placed him at a disadvantage against his colleagues, who could always override him on technical points. To complete the above sketch of the Board it should be added that its members were not restricted to the performance of its duties. From time to time the Winters and Holstocke held commands of the Queen's ships at sea, and they

¹ The Surveyor of the Victuals was not a member of the Board.

and Gonson were also shipowners and merchants in their private capacity. We have seen them concerned with Hawkins in the Guinea trade and in sending privateers to the Caribbean. All this was quite unexceptionable by the practice of the time.

John Hawkins was early in touch with the Navy Board. In 1559 he married Gonson's daughter Katherine, and in his slaving voyages he chartered ships of the Navy, while Gonson and the Winters were his partners. The bearing of the Hawkins expeditions on national policy has already been discussed. After San Juan de Ulua he went no more to the West because he was earmarked as the country's chief sea-commander should war break out, and at the time of the Ridolfi Plot he was in charge of his own armed squadron at Plymouth in readiness to counter a stroke from Spain. Although not a member of the Navy Board, he ranked unofficially on a higher plane than any of them. In the early 1570's his position was that of Gonson's son-in-law, the business ally of Sir William Winter, and a prominent servant of the Queen, employed by her on several naval occasions of importance. It is thus fairly safe to infer that his advice was influential on matters that concerned the work of the Board.

Hawkins at this time foresaw that the enemy of the future would be Spain, and he planned that the Navy should not restrict itself to passive defence against invasion but should bring Philip to terms by an offensive on the Atlantic, cutting off the supply of western treasure and so depriving the King of the armies with which he threatened the liberties of Europe. Hawkins was an ocean man experienced in far-flung expeditions, and acquainted with the means by which a fighting fleet could keep the sea for months at a stretch. In this he differed

from Sir William Winter, a man of the Narrow Seas, all of whose active service had been compassed between Bordeaux, Hamburg and the Firth of Forth. The difference was fundamental. For Hawkins the desirable ship-of-war was low-built, weatherly and seaworthy, the anti-thesis of the tragic *Jesus of Lubeck* whose qualities he had cause to rue. Winter and the regular Navy men belonged to an older tradition. They preferred the high-charged ship, impregnable if unhandy, crowded with men who would soon consume the stores, but serving near home ports whence supplies could be replenished; and their fleet would have been of little use for the ocean campaigns which Hawkins dwelt upon. We gather these conflicting principles from the observed acts and subsequent declarations of the two parties.¹ Their actual discussions in the 'seventies are unrecorded. It was in all probability due to the advice of Hawkins, although the fact cannot be positively stated, that in 1570 and the following years some galleon-type vessels were added to the Navy, long in proportion to their beam, moderate in size, with low superstructures, and heavily gunned. The most notable of these ships was the *Revenge* of 450 tons, turned out in 1575, and destined in her blazing end sixteen years later to justify her designers. If Hawkins was not her begetter, she was without doubt the sort of ship that he and Drake preferred.

Hawkins desired to change the Navy from a home-service into an ocean-going force, and also to increase its strength as far as might be. He was a realist, not given to proposing ideal but impossible programmes, and he knew that finance was the obstacle. The Queen had to

¹ Up to 1569, when Hawkins made his influence felt at home, the new ships were of the short, high-charged type. In the early eighties, when Hawkins was in control, the Winter party made it an accusation against him that he had constructed low-built ships.

live on a fixed revenue unless she would call Parliaments, whose members meddled in exasperating fashion with the foreign policy which could not be openly explained to them. Thus no increase of naval expenditure could be considered until war was actually begun—and not much even then. Hawkins's remedy was to make the existing money go farther, in other words to stop the speculation which he knew was going on. His father-in-law seems to have been honest, but not strong enough to withstand the nautical members of the Board, and especially the masterful Sir William Winter. Although the Treasurer was by this time recognised as the senior member, Winter was flouting his control, keeping important transactions secret, and filling all places with his own nominees, all to the end that he might take toll of every coil of rope and load of timber bought with the Queen's money. Gonson was growing old and sick of it all. He revealed these things freely to Hawkins, and it was agreed that Gonson should resign and that Hawkins should apply for the Treasurership. But the old man warned him that it would be an unhappy task: 'I shall pluck a thorn out of my foot and put it into yours'. Hawkins had three qualifications for the post. He was a seaman, a business man, and an honest man. But was he the last? Accusations soon filled the air and mud flew, and for years in some men's mouths Hawkins was base. We now can form an opinion on documents that were secret then, and for those who have read them Hawkins is vindicated. In his own time his name was good with Burghley and the Queen, no bad judges.

In 1577 Hawkins had interviews with Burghley and showed him how the State was being defrauded. The substance of these talks is alluded to and summarised in a document which Hawkins drew up for

the minister about the end of the year. It is endorsed: 'Abuses in the Admiralty touching Her Majesty's Navy, exhibited by Mr Hawkins'. It was customary at the time to record the regular naval expenditure under two heads, the ordinary and the extraordinary. The ordinary was the routine work of maintaining the ships out of commission, including the cost of moorings and materials and wages of shipkeepers and shipwrights for light repairs. Hawkins showed from the accounts that this had been costing £6000 a year, and he asserted that it could be more efficiently done for £4000. The expense of rebuildings and heavy repairs in dry dock was called the extraordinary, and here he declared that the Queen was being monstrously overcharged. A recent overhaul of six ships was costing £6500 and could have been done for well under £5000. For other work the Queen had paid £9000 for timber, less than half of which had been used and the rest privately sold. Winter had built several ships for himself and other private persons partly or entirely with the Queen's timber. These ships and their owners are named in the report, and a great deal more of similar categorical detail is included. Additional to all this was the cost of building new ships and of mobilising squadrons for active service. Here again Hawkins gave his figures. The *Revenge* and a pinnace built with her should have cost £2200, but the Queen had been charged £4000.¹ The *Foresight* was built with timber already in the yards and paid for, but the Queen was charged for a complete stock of additional timber for the job; and so on with many more instances great and small. And Hawkins made no insinuation on the identity of the culprit; he

¹ Another document gives these figures as £2600 and £4400 respectively. Perhaps Hawkins inadvertently omitted the cost of the pinnace.

stated plainly that it was Sir William Winter, a man of 'wilful covetousness'.¹

Burghley accepted the indictment. We must assume that he made enquiry into the details, but it was a case in which the wisest of statesmen would be technically ignorant and at the mercy of witnesses with an interest in perverting the truth. His decision must have rested chiefly on broad impressions of character. He had known Hawkins and Winter for twenty years and had doubtless formed his opinion of them. On 1 January 1578 John Hawkins was appointed Treasurer of the Navy. It was Burghley's greatest step in preparing for the Spanish War.

In the public interest Hawkins had broken friendship with one who had been his ally in many past transactions, and he was now set to work with the man whom he had exposed. For Winter was not dismissed, neither was his brother nor Holstocke. That was not the custom of the reign. The occasions on which Elizabeth broke a public servant are rare. In general she watched keenly and forgave—treasonable nobles, unfaithful councillors, dishonest officials—and there are remarkable instances in which the policy was effective and the culprits reformed. The Queen tolerated knaves and reserved her severity for fools, perhaps because she found so few men honest that able knaves had to be tolerated. So the former Navy Board continued with Hawkins at its head, and his fight began for a Navy that would save the country.

After a year in office he came to the conclusion that he could not make the reforms and economies he had pledged without a change in the organisation. The

¹ The document is described at greater length than is possible here in the present author's *Sir John Hawkins*, pp. 331-5.

rest of the Board were his opponents and made use of their powers to thwart him. He therefore proposed an arrangement which took formal shape in October 1579, and is known as 'the first bargain'. By it he undertook to find at his own detailed expense all the cordage for the ships and the cables and hawsers for their moorings and for laying them aground and hauling off again, in return for a lump sum of £1200 a year. At the same time the two master-shipwrights, Peter Pett and Matthew Baker, undertook all the routine work of their department, the grounding of the ships at specified intervals, renewing caulking, planks and spars, and paying the wages for the same, for £1000 a year. Thus the greater part of the ordinary was to be done on contract, and the other officers of the Board were precluded from taking any part in the expenditure. An obvious point was that Hawkins and the shipwrights might not do the work thoroughly, and this was provided against by a clause requiring the Winters and Holstocke to survey and report on their proceedings to the Lord Treasurer (Burghley). Hawkins would thus be subject to the supervision of his opponents, and that he accepted the condition shows that he intended to play fair. The first bargain dealt only with ordinary expenditure, and the extraordinary was left as before under control of the whole Board. Sir William Winter was very indignant, and was temporarily got rid of by being sent to command a squadron on the Irish coast to cope with the papal volunteers of 1580.

Hawkins had promised Burghley an annual saving of £4000, or almost the cost of two *Revenues*. That he kept this promise the accounts bear witness. In fact, during the five years of the first bargain the ordinary and extraordinary together were done for the same

expenditure as had formerly covered the ordinary alone. It does not appear that the Queen allowed much of this saving to be utilised in building additional ships. In 1579 there were twenty-two ships of all sizes and in 1585 twenty-three, together with ten ocean-going pinnaces. But many of the ships themselves had been transformed in the interval. As the older ones came into dry-dock for heavy repairs, Hawkins rebuilt them so drastically that in some cases a virtually new vessel emerged. The old type, beamy and high-charged, were lengthened and had the superstructures cut down. The aim was to make them into fast-sailing galleons, the galleon being a ship with a proportion between length of keel and beam of about three to one. Not only were they faster and able to sail closer to the wind, but they could keep the sea longer, for in rough weather the high-built ships had been found to develop strains and leaks and had been obliged to seek port for repairs. Hawkins had learnt that lesson painfully in the *Jesus of Lubeck*. Thus it may be said that in his first five years he converted an out-of-date fleet into a modern one.

Naturally the opposition gave trouble. There is no record of the reports made by the Board on Hawkins's work, but we do know that in general his fellow-officers denounced him and sought to spread the impression that he had pushed his way into the Navy administration in order to make money for himself. In 1584 Hawkins complained to Burghley of their factious conduct, which he said extended even to procuring that work should be ill done of set purpose to provide matter for criticism. 'I have endeavoured with all fidelity and painful travail', he wrote, 'to reduce the whole course of this office into such order as the same might be safe, sure, and bounti-

fully provided, and performed with an easy and convenient charge, so that Her Majesty thereby should not be discouraged to maintain so necessary a defence for her royal state and country. . . . In the passing of these great things the adversaries of the work have continually opposed themselves against me and the service so far as they durst be seen in it, so that among a number of trifling crossings and slanders the very walls of the realm have been brought in question; and their slander hath gone very far and general, to the encouragement of the enemies of God and our country, only to be avenged of me and this service, which doth discover the corruption and ignorance of the time past.'

The allegation that 'the walls of the realm', the ships under Hawkins's charge, were rotten, had indeed been unceasingly repeated, so much so that Burghley had felt bound in 1583 to appoint a commission of enquiry. It sat under the presidency of the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Hunsdon), assisted by the Lord Admiral and either Walsingham or Sir Walter Mildmay, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. These three ministers selected an expert sub-committee, in effect a jury, from a list of eleven of the most notable captains of the time, including Drake, Frobisher, Raleigh, Richard Bingham, Fulke Greville and Henry Palmer. The matters into which the Commission was to enquire fall under two main heads: (1) All the detailed offences of the Winter régime of which Hawkins had complained when he took office, and (2) the statement of Hawkins's opponents that the ships were now, under his care, 'grown into so great decay that few of them are able to serve'. Unfortunately not a word has survived of the evidence given before the Commission or of the terms of its report. All we know is that it vindicated Hawkins, as is

shown by a subsequent allusion to 'my Lord Chamberlain's survey' having declared the ships to be in an efficient state.

That having been concluded on the finding of such men as Drake and Frobisher,¹ who expected to command these very ships in the coming war, the next attack took a different line. It came from William Borough, a captain of the old school, who had served only in European waters and had joined the Navy Board as Clerk of the Ships on the death of George Winter in 1580. Borough asserted that the contract was too favourable to Hawkins, and that the latter was obviously growing rich by it since his fixed salary was £300 a year while he was living at the rate of £800. This of course neglected the fact that Hawkins was a man of independent means; he himself is said to have stated that when he dissolved partnership with his brother William on leaving Plymouth at the beginning of the slaving ventures, his share of the capital was £10,000.² Borough then went on to attack Hawkins's policy in the design of the ships, maintaining that he had reduced their fighting value by cutting down their high superstructures until they looked like merchantmen. It was the grievance of the old Navy against the new. Borough, as his subsequent history was vividly to show, simply could not understand the new ideas in tactics and strategy; but we may legitimately imagine Burghley having a talk with Drake on the qualities of

¹ We do not know which of the eleven were actually selected, but all except one were men who had held command at sea and were to do so again.

² It is fair to give Sir William Winter's comment when he heard of the £10,000: 'What a dissembling knave is that! When he was hurt in the Strand and made his will, he was not able to give £500'. Hawkins was stabbed in the Strand in 1573 by a Puritan fanatic who mistook him for Sir Christopher Hatton.

an ocean-going fleet. At any rate, Borough's 'Dutiful Declaration' missed fire.

So it went on, hammer and tongs. After Borough, Winter took up the assault again with a venomous letter to Burghley on Hawkins's 'cunning and craft to maintain his pride and ambition and for the better filling of his purse' and including a detailed accusation (the only one in the attack) that there were three rotten timbers in the *Hope*. Through all the storm of obloquy Hawkins moved to a new advance in the concentration of power in his own hands, and Burghley consented. It took formal shape in the summer of 1585 as 'the second bargain'.

By the second bargain the Queen's contract with the master-shipwrights was rescinded, and they reverted to their former status of purely salaried servants. Hawkins undertook to do the whole of the work under the heading of 'ordinary' for £4000 a year, the services included being considerably more extensive than those specified under the two contracts of the first bargain. Further he undertook the whole of the 'extraordinary' for £1714 a year. Thus the entire maintenance of the Navy and all its accessory services, including even the garrison of Upnor Castle below Chatham, was placed on one contract, to be performed by Hawkins for £5714 annually. Before his time that sum had been allotted to the ordinary alone, while the extraordinary had averaged about £4000. In effect he was providing the Queen with a somewhat larger and, as he claimed, better fleet at a saving of over forty per cent of the cost. The figures were indisputable, but the quality of his work was still disputed, and right up to the Armada year it was clamorously repeated that the ships were rotten and the nation lost. Then the great

guns and the sea, powers that will pass no lie, gave judgment.

It was time for the Queen to spend the savings on new ships, and from 1585 she did so. In the next two years there were built eight new ocean-going pinnaces (seven of 50 tons, and one of 70), two fighting galleons of the *Revenge* type, and a smaller ship of 150 tons. In addition Raleigh had privately built a large galleon of 600 tons, the *Ark Raleigh*, and in 1587 she was bought for the Navy and became the *Ark Royal*, the Lord Admiral's flagship in the campaign of the following year. By that date two small and old vessels of the 1585 list had dropped out, and the Queen possessed twenty-five fighting ships and eighteen pinnaces, of immeasurably greater capacity for service than when Hawkins had taken charge in 1578.

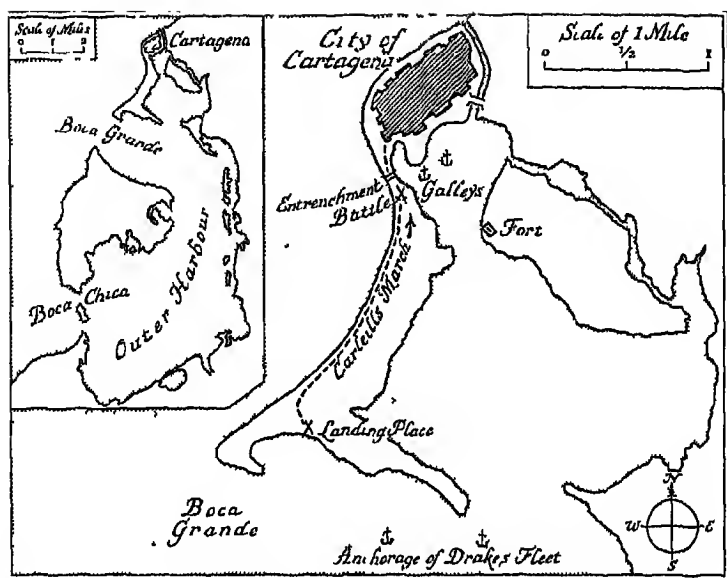
As has been said, the denunciation of Hawkins continued, but it no longer proceeded from the Navy Board. Burghley's conclusion of the second bargain was a patent declaration that the government had confidence in Hawkins. After that Winter gave it up and became friendly again. The reconciliation, which was sincere and lasting, was a sore blow to the evil-speakers, who were driven to explain it by asserting that two rival thieves had now combined to rob the Queen. Borough also was converted. Hawkins had always spoken well of him and had evidently regarded him as a worthy but misguided man. In 1586 Hawkins got to sea in command of a squadron and took Borough as his vice-admiral, after which there was no more enmity from that quarter. Hawkins had fairly beaten both these men, and the fact that they were able to shake hands on it is a testimony not only to their characters but to his. Meanwhile the calumnies continued from outside

the service. They are recorded at great length, but cannot be repeated here, save that two different accusers wrote to Burghley in 1587, one that the ships were brought 'to their last end and dangerous state', the other that the ruin of the Navy was a service rendered by Hawkins for Spanish pay!

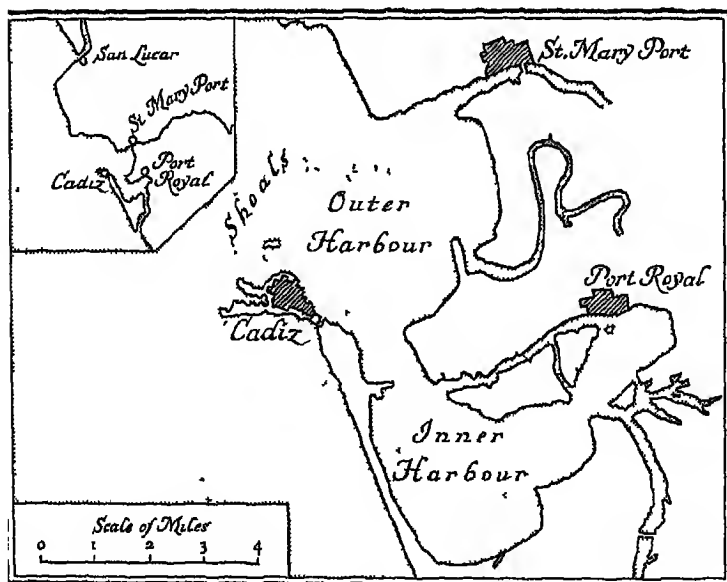
This period produced one more reform, that of the manning of the fleet and the pay of the men. In the older Navy it had been thought necessary to crowd the maximum number of men into the ships, on the assumption that boarding and a hand-to-hand fight would decide the issue. That assumption had long been out of date, but as late as 1582 a mobilisation plan accepted one man to every $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons of shipping as the correct proportion. Hawkins did not believe in it. He held that overcrowding meant uncleanness and consequent epidemics, and he knew also that it tied the fleet to its home ports by necessitating frequent revictualling. In 1585 he persuaded Burghley to sanction a proportion of one man to two tons, and it was on this scale that the Navy fought the Armada. At the same time he pointed out that the low pay caused good seamen to avoid the Queen's service and only the 'tag and rag' to remain in it, and he gave figures to show that the lower number of well-paid men would cost no more than the large ill-paid rabble, whilst giving much better service. The argument was successful, and the pay was raised from 6s. 8d. to 10s. per month.

By the close of 1587 John Hawkins was satisfied that he had done the work he had undertaken ten years before. He had made a fleet capable of bringing Philip II to his knees, and he now wished to be free to take his share in commanding it. But the contract by which he was doing virtually the whole work of the Navy

Board tied his hands. At his own request it was brought to an end, and the other officers were reinstated in their former functions on Hawkins giving his recommendation that they might be trusted to yield good service in the future. Burghley assented, but a paper in his handwriting shows that he was considering a set of strict regulations to ensure that they should.



CARTAGENA



CADIZ

CHAPTER XV

THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1585-87

THE events of 1585-87 turned out to be the opening movements in a long and serious war with Spain, but that should not blind us to the fact that in the minds of contemporaries those events were not irrevocable acts of war. They were rather the application of diplomatic pressure in a drastic form with the object of making the opponent come to terms without resorting to regular war. This is especially true on the English side, and it explains the attitude so often charged against Elizabeth and her ministers of hesitation and neglect of opportunities in the opening stage. Had the Queen conceived herself to be at war, the criticism would have been just. But she actually conceived herself to be engaged in diplomacy to avert a war. Her diplomacy failed, but its failure was not a foregone conclusion. It was due to Philip II's change of policy from a reluctance to fight to a determination to do so and to cut all knots by an invasion and conquest of England. The Queen cannot altogether be blamed for not foreseeing the change, which was out of character with Philip's previous record. Some well-informed men in England agreed with her view that Spain would not take the offensive, and Philip's greatest general, the Prince of Parma, was convinced when it came to the point that he was wrong in doing so, as in fact the course of events was to prove. We must therefore interpret the actions

of these years in the light available to contemporaries, and recognise that although as a matter of history the war began in 1585, it did not become a decision beyond recall until the despatch of the Armada in 1588.

When Drake returned from the East in 1580 he was anxious to follow up his success by still larger operations, and for many years he believed that Portuguese discontent with Spanish overlordship was a factor worth exploiting. The projects of the years 1581-83 have been dealt with in a previous chapter. In 1584 yet another took shape under Drake's personal management. It came to nothing in its original form, and our knowledge of it is limited, but it was evidently the foundation of his proceedings in the following year. The plan is set forth in one of Burghley's papers endorsed in his hand: '20 Nov., 1584. The charge of the navy to the Moluccas.' A syndicate consisting of the Queen, the Earl of Leicester, John and William Hawkins, Drake, Raleigh and Hatton, was to find £40,000 for equipping eleven ships, four barks and twenty pinnaces, with 1600 men. The details suggest that it was rather a military than a trading expedition, and another document indicates that Drake was to be in command. There are no particulars about the route to be chosen, whether by the Cape or the Straits, and we may imagine that if Drake had intended the latter, with a further plundering of Peru by the way, a good deal of mystification would have been maintained to prevent information from leaking out. The expedition was already being prepared at the date appended to the document, since it is stated that £6000 had then been expended. Before the fleet was ready to sail the situation altered, and Drake's destination became the West Indies.

After Philip II's successful absorption of Portugal the attitude of the King to his various problems visibly hardened. He had scored the first solid success of his reign; and he had at last found in the Prince of Parma a statesman and general who gave promise of another, the reduction of the Netherlands. Parma went from strength to strength, detaching the southern provinces from their adhesion to William of Orange, evicting Anjou from the country in 1583, and capturing the chief cities of the south which still resisted in 1584. At the end of that year Antwerp alone remained, but the methodical preparations of Parma gave almost a certainty that it would fall in 1585, as indeed it did. After that the way would be clear for a similar advance on the Dutch and Calvinist north. It is perhaps not fanciful to discern a change in Philip's character in these years. As ever, he was the Catholic King, the temporal leader of the Counter-Reformation. But though he could still in matters of business treat the Pope as a brother diplomatist, criticise him, and bargain shrewdly with him, personal religion became an increasingly powerful factor in his decisions. As his hair grew grey Philip became a pietist, almost a fanatic, and the habit grew upon him of regarding himself as the appointed leader of a holy war. This may explain Elizabeth's miscalculation. She understood the earlier Philip, whose springs of action had been almost as secular as her own. She was incapable of understanding a pietist or a fanatic.

One of the first-fruits of the King's decline in prudent restraint was the public offer of a reward to anyone who would murder the Prince of Orange. William was shot, but not killed, in 1582; four other intending murderers were successively detected; and in 1584 the sixth succeeded at a time when the victim's people were,

facing a more formidable assailant even than Alva. Whether Philip also approved of the proposed murder of Elizabeth by the Throckmorton plotters is not clear. But he naturally received credit for it, and the result of the whole murder-campaign was an incalculable stiffening of the fighting spirit among all his enemies.

Early in 1585 the Guises and the Catholic League in France took the field as Philip's acknowledged allies, with the object of fighting the Huguenots to a finish and preventing the succession of Henry of Navarre to the throne. At the same time Elizabeth was known to be negotiating with the Dutch on the terms by which she was to become their ally and protector. She was risking war with Spain, but she had to do it, for Dutch freedom was England's outwork, and hopes of French assistance had died with the Duke of Anjou. Philip had hitherto passed over a good deal of English aid to his rebels, but he was now disinclined to do so. His affairs were everywhere prospering, and during this year the decision slowly took shape in his mind to fight England and bring all to one grand issue. He had already discussed plans for an invasion, but had put them aside. Exactly when he determined upon it cannot be stated, for he was always slow to reveal his thoughts. But by the opening of 1586 it may safely be said that he had decided.

In May, 1585, he took a step which by contemporary practice was an act of diplomacy, not of war. He ordered the arrest of all English shipping in Spanish ports. So far it was very much the same story as that of 1569-71, with the events in slightly different order—plot, expulsion of an ambassador, arrest of goods. Elizabeth made her treaty with the Dutch in August, pledging military aid, but this did not necessarily involve her with Philip as a principal. Then, in Septem-

ber, Drake's fleet being ready, she despatched him to make reprisals for the Spanish arrest; and reprisals within limits were a recognised practice falling short of war. For anything which Drake might probably do beyond the limit the Queen had her answer ready: 'If need be, the gentleman careth not if I disavow him'. His commission, dated 1 July, enjoined him merely to visit the Spanish ports and demand the release of the ships and men, and colour was added to it by the quite legitimate issue of letters of reprisal by the Admiralty Court to various merchants who had proved injury from the arrest.¹

Drake's expedition was a government promotion in the form of a joint-stock enterprise for the subscribers' profit, constitutionally somewhat similar to Hawkins's expedition of 1567. The ships were more numerous and the capital fifty per cent larger than in the draft plan of November, 1584. The principal shareholders were probably the same, although sure information is lacking on this point. Of the £60,400 embarked in the voyage the Queen provided £10,000 in cash and two ships of the Navy which were grossly overvalued at another £10,000, a book-keeping fiction which enabled her to draw profit at a greater proportionate rate than the other associates. We shall have several further transactions of the same sort to deal with, and here it may be well to emphasise once again that the profit in question was not that of the Queen as an individual but ultimately that of the taxpayer.

¹ M. Oppenheim, *The Naval Tracts of Sir William Monson* (Navy Records Society, 1902, etc.), Vol. I, p. 125. Monson's Tracts are not in themselves a very valuable historical authority, but Mr. Oppenheim's editorial matter embodies wide and deep scholarship and constitutes the best history of the naval war. The present writer is greatly indebted to it in this and subsequent chapters.

The naval vessels were the *Elizabeth Bonaventure*, 600 tons, and the *Aid*, 250 tons, both old ships which had been rebuilt and most likely lengthened to galleon proportions by Hawkins.¹ With them were twenty-seven others large and small, of which the *Galleon Leicester*, 400 tons, was built for her owner as a private ship-of-war, and the others were merchantmen or privateers of London and the western ports. Five of them were of 200 tons, a large size for merchantmen at that time, and the Turkey Company's armed traders may have been represented among them. The men were distinguished as mariners and soldiers—twelve companies of the latter—and the total force was about 2300. Drake was both Admiral and General, Martin Frobisher was Vice-Admiral, Christopher Carleill Lieutenant-General, and Anthony Powell Sergeant-Major, a rank which evolved through the transitional form Sergeant-Major-General into the modern Major-General. Among the captains of ships and companies were Edward Winter a son of Sir William, Richard Hawkins son of John, Thomas Drake brother of Sir Francis, William Cecil grandson of Lord Burghley, Francis Knollys brother-in-law of Leicester, Robert Cross, Thomas Fenner and others whose names are known in the records of the time, altogether a distinguished company.

Beyond his official instructions to deal with the Spanish arrest it was understood by all concerned that Drake was to raid the Spanish colonies and, if possible, intercept the returning plate-fleets. In principle the plan was that recommended by Hawkins in 1579,² but the details had of course to be left to Drake, acting on the

¹ The *Aid* had been described as of 200 tons in 1577. The additional tonnage probably represents her lengthening.

² See *ante*, p. 197.

circumstances as they arose. Walsingham, whose policy was consistently aggressive, hoped that the hardest possible blow would be struck. Burghley, in spite of his general distrust of irregular sea warfare, was also eager that Drake should proceed. Whether he believed that Philip intended invasion and that Drake's expedition would be a preventive stroke is not quite clear, although Hawkins no doubt advised him to that effect. But Burghley was convinced that the Dutch would collapse in default of English aid and that their downfall would be fatal to England. The Queen was beginning to hesitate about fighting for the Dutch, and a trenchant stroke by Drake would make it more difficult for her to veer towards Philip and would also cripple the King's finances. Thus Burghley no less than Walsingham was now for action, and was on tenterhooks lest the Queen's doubts should move her to revoke Drake's commission before he could start.

As soon as his sailing orders arrived at Plymouth, Drake made off in considerable haste on 14 September 1585.¹ Knowing that a cancellation might follow at any moment, he left with unfilled water-casks and victuals tumbled anyhow into the nearest ships available. On the 27th the expedition reached Vigo Bay, where Drake landed parties at Bayona and Vigo and captured some booty. He learned that the arrest had already been lifted, and found that the English merchants in this region preferred to stay and carry on business rather than take passage with him. After some minor hostilities and an armistice he completed his watering and sailed away on 8 October. His visit had a great effect on the prestige that was then so important in the affairs of states. To

¹ For the mysterious story of Sir Philip Sidney's attempt to join the expedition, see Corbett, Vol. II, pp. 16-21.

'insult' the King of Spain in one of his home ports was an action very different from a similar stroke in the distant colonies, and it set all Europe talking; while for Drake himself it was the beginning of that continuous blaze of publicity which raised him in the public mind to the status of a personal duellist against Philip II. No other English subject in the sixteenth century attained a comparable position in the eyes of the world, nor did the material results alone of Drake's deeds entitle him to it. The enthusiasm he evoked and the dismay he inflicted were manifestations of that indefinable quality that is called genius.

He soon learned that one part of the programme could not take effect, for the two plate-fleets of 1585 came safely into San Lucar, the one on 10 September, the other on the day he left Vigo. His next point was the Canary Islands, but rough weather prevented a landing at Las Palmas, where victuals might have been captured, and at Gomera there was only water to be obtained. Thence the fleet sailed to the Cape Verdes and thoroughly sacked the towns of Santiago and Porto Praya. It seems to have been partly a punitive measure in retaliation for the treacherous attack made on William Hawkins in 1582. The Cape Verdes made no effective resistance, but nevertheless inflicted heavy loss on the English, for they infected the ships' companies with their virulent local species of fever. Within a week it was raging through the fleet, nearly 300 men died, and a great many more remained invalids throughout the voyage. This took place while Drake was making what should have been the prosperous trade-wind passage across the Atlantic to the Caribbean. No doubt he could not have foreseen the epidemic—although the Cape Verdes had already a bad reputation—but on other

grounds it seems to have been questionable policy to go out of his way to make this visit, for his object was to deal a smashing blow at the sources of Philip's colonial revenues, in which respect the African islands were not important. Hawkins had advised striking directly at the Caribbean without diversion by the way.

Drake reached the Antilles in mid-December, watered at Dominica, and chose St. Christopher as a quieter spot at which to rummage and cleanse the ships and camp the sick on shore. During the process he sent forward a force to reconnoitre Santo Domingo, which was to be the first point of attack. The city was not only the capital of Hispaniola but the Westminster of the Spanish Indies, the seat of the legal and administrative routine which played so large a part in the colonial organisation. It no longer shipped treasure, for the island mines had ceased to be worked, and its other commerce was not of the first importance, but it was a dignified and magnificent place, the especial home of the class whom the French call 'fonctionnaires'. The scouting force learned that the harbour entrance was narrow and commanded by heavy batteries, but that there was a practicable landing beach ten miles to the westward.

On New Year's day, 1586, Drake personally set Carleill and his soldiers ashore at this place, while the main fleet demonstrated off Santo Domingo. Then, while the troops were on the march, he sailed back to the fleet and made a show of landing close to the city. The garrison drew out to oppose him, and were surprised by Carleill appearing in their rear with all the pomp of drums and banners. The Spaniards changed front and prepared to resist, but the English broke them with a charge and rushed into the city at their

heels. That night the castle overlooking the harbour was also evacuated by its defenders, and when Drake had brought in the fleet Santo Domingo was his. The booty was disappointing: shipping in the port, guns from the defences, and rich household furniture in abundance, but no treasure. But the city was worth a ransom, and negotiations were opened to that end. They ran their course with the queer mixture of savagery and civility characteristic of the time. A Spanish officer under a flag of truce wantonly ran his lance through a negro belonging to Drake. The latter retaliated by hanging two friars and threatening to continue with his other prisoners until the murderer was given up. He was duly brought forth, and his own compatriots were compelled to hang him in sight of both sides. After that Spaniards came in and conversed pleasantly with the English, and suffered some leg-pulling over Philip II's coat-of-arms carved on a staircase with the motto *Non sufficit orbis*, which their hosts innocently asked them to translate. For the ransom Drake set the price too high, and the Spaniards could not pay it. The English attempted to destroy the city but made poor progress with the solid stone buildings, and ultimately they accepted a reduced sum of 25,000 ducats. On 1 February the expedition set sail, having enjoyed a pleasant month in free and luxurious quarters.

It has been intended that all the ports along the Spanish Main should be 'stricken' in turn, but in view of his reduced strength Drake decided to pass lightly by the smaller places and go to Cartagena, the capital. Accordingly he crossed the Caribbean southwards and touched only at Rio de la Hacha, whence he coasted to Cartagena. The city was a harder nut to crack than Santo Domingo, for its strong fortifications were so sur-

rounded by sea and marshes that approach was difficult, and the garrison must at least have equalled the numbers of Carleill's soldiers. Drake had seen it before, more than once, and was able to discern the weak spot which offered a chance to a rapid onslaught. He anchored his fleet in the great lagoon and landed the troops by night on the point of the peninsula that gave access to the seaward face of the city. A line of entrenchments crossed the peninsula from the lagoon to the open sea, their defenders were on the alert, and galleys moored in the lagoon were ready to enfilade the assailants. But Carleill, by leading his men along the outer beach well down at the water's edge, found it possible to approach in dead ground immune from the fire of the galleys and to turn the end of the entrenchments where they tailed off into the water. The result was as at Santo Domingo, a sharp clash of arms, the rout of the Spaniards, and the simultaneous entry of victors and vanquished into the city. The immediate credit was with the soldiers, but the decision and the plan of action were Drake's. By Spanish standards of military training the English were but amateurs—although Carleill had gained his experience in the Netherland wars—but Drake had pitted the quick improvisation of the privateer against the drilled ritual of the regular. If Cartagena had been assaulted by the accepted rules of the military art, it would have been perfectly safe. The small scale of the affair and the consequent speed with which it was accomplished had much to do with the result. As Drake was to find later in his career, the same principle did not apply to armies numbered by thousands instead of hundreds and to movements spread over many miles and days.

At Cartagena there was another long halt, from 9

February to 31 March. It was not so pleasant as the previous one, for fever broke out again and many more men died, or survived broken in body and 'decayed in their wits'. The mental symptoms became a military witticism, so that if a man did any foolish action he was told that evidently he had had the *calentura*. The reduction in his force caused Drake to abandon a half-formed intention of leaving a garrison to hold Cartagena in permanence. It is not probable that the Queen had sanctioned the step, which would have been rather different from the dimly discernible intention to occupy Panama in 1578. At that time Drake had been manifestly nothing but a privateer, but now he was just as evidently an officer of the Queen. The holding of Cartagena would have involved her responsibility, and any subsequent withdrawal would have touched her prestige. Critics have been divided on Drake's decision to evacuate, some holding that it was a chance missed, others that it would have been disastrous to remain. Thus it became, as at Santo Domingo, a question of the ransom that could be extorted from the Spaniards, and long negotiations produced a payment of 110,000 ducats, or about a quarter as much as Drake began by demanding. In addition of course the English had the guns from the fortifications and the sacking of the town, which produced little in the shape of treasure.

That old dream of the 1570's, the capture of Panama by an advance through the friendly Cimaroon country, had also been in the programme, but now there were not enough men left to make it feasible. Drake therefore began his homeward voyage by the western point of Cuba and the Florida Channel. Although he lingered for three weeks on the north-western coast of Cuba, he was unable to beat eastwards as far as Matanzas, and

Havana was too strong to be attacked. After his return he stated that he had missed a plate-fleet by twelve hours, but there is no evidence that the Mexican convoy of 1586 was at sea in time to have crossed his path in May; he was more likely alluding to the fleet that just evaded him on the coast of Spain in the previous October. Leaving Cuba, he took and sacked the Spanish settlement of Saint Augustine in Florida, capturing some more guns and a little money. Then, as narrated in a previous chapter, he visited Raleigh's Virginia and brought away its first colonists, and so passed on across the Atlantic to arrive at Portsmouth on 28 July, 1586. When all accounts were settled, the booty was sufficient to repay 15 shillings in the pound of the expenses. The rank-and-file, who served for shares in lieu of regular pay, seem to have received £6 each, not an extravagant reward for ten months' service which had cost the lives of 750 men; but in the captured cities they had personally annexed many valuables that would otherwise have gone into the general stock.

The damage to Spain was much greater than the above figures would indicate. The West had indeed been stricken. Philip's credit with the European financiers was shaken, Parma's victories were checked by lack of money, and the commercial ruin suffered by Spanish subjects was enormous. The colonial defences had all to be reconstructed and 240 lost guns to be replaced. The difficulty under that head alone is illustrated by the fact that, although Spain produced excellent native iron, her industrial condition was such that she had no foundries capable of casting it into ordnance. A considerable tonnage of shipping had been destroyed, which her own shipyards could supply only at uneconomic costs. A multitude of galley-slaves had been

released, including a hundred Turks whom the Queen astutely returned to the Grand Seignior by the hands of the Turkey Company. As an act of war the raid had been a triumphant success. Had Elizabeth only viewed it as an act of war she could have followed it up by others which would have completed the destruction of the sources of Spanish power. But in fact she rested satisfied and awaited the diplomatic results. One of them was perhaps unlooked-for: her subject, a mere knight of humble origin, had leapt to a European position as the champion of freedom against despotism. Burghley discerned that when he wrote, 'Truly Sir Francis Drake is a fearful man to the King of Spain'.¹

During Drake's absence the European situation had grown steadily more warlike. In France the Catholic League was making headway against Henry of Navarre and the Huguenots. It was essentially a part of Philip's crusade against Protestantism. Henry III of France was not expected to live long, and Navarre was now the next in succession; and Philip could not tolerate the prospect of France falling under a Protestant king. He lent aid to the Guises and expected aid from them against his northern enemies. In the Netherlands Parma's successes culminated in the capture of Antwerp in August 1585. Nothing then stood in the way of the Prince's advance against the seven Dutch provinces. The Queen of England had to promise them military aid, and after much hesitation she sent over Leicester with 7000 men at the end of the year. Her hesitation is intelligible, for the estimated expense of Leicester's force was £126,000 a year, or more than one-third of the Queen's ordinary revenue. In 1586 that costly army achieved very little, and the Dutch were saved rather by the crippling of

¹ Corbett, II, p. 61.

Spanish finances resulting from Drake's campaign. When we remember that Drake's blow had cost the Queen virtually nothing and could have been repeated on the same terms, her blindness to the possibilities of sea-power appears tragic. It is true that when she made the Dutch alliance Drake had yet to act, but for years past he and Hawkins had been trying to explain the deadliness of the weapon in England's grasp. And when he had acted, her incomprehension remained much the same and continued to the end. The strategic employment of sea-power to produce decisive results on the continent of Europe was an idea so new that only those who had made it their professional study could be expected to understand it. To speak of it to the Queen and her Council, if we except Walsingham, was futile.¹

It would seem that the 'insult' at Vigo and still more the despatch of Leicester to the Low Countries precipitated Philip's decision to invade England. After long dallying with the notion he ordered Santa Cruz to draw up detailed plans in January 1586, and thenceforward the preparations proceeded. In taking this step the King was doing what had long been obvious to his military advisers, who were not troubled by his problems of finance and diplomacy. Finance demanded that the Pope should contribute to the cost of a conquest to be made in the interest of the Church. Diplomacy had to

¹ The conditions inspiring the idea were also new, for never before had England's enemy been dependent for his life on sea-borne supplies, as Philip was on the western treasure. On this matter see Prof. R. B. Merriman, Philip's latest historian. Merriman (*Rise of the Spanish Empire*, vol. iv) indeed argues that the net revenue from the Indies was not so great as many have supposed, but elsewhere he gives figures showing that the Indies were the only part of the King's dominions that produced any surplus at all. All other regions merely piled up the deficit. For illustrative figures on the treasure output, see also A. P. Newton, *The European Nations in the West Indies*, Pioneer Histories, 1933, pp. 31-2.

reckon with Mary Stuart, officially recognised by the Catholic Church as the rightful claimant to Elizabeth's throne. In the event of success Philip would find it difficult to avoid making her Queen, and yet he was naturally reluctant to make so great an effort for anyone's benefit but his own. By the opening of 1586 he had secured a substantial grant of Spanish clerical revenues from Pope Sixtus V, but could never extort from Rome itself the much greater sum that he considered due. The Pope was firm that payment should begin only when the Spanish army had landed in England. As for Mary Stuart, her matter bade fair to solve itself. The Throckmorton Plot, succeeded by two more assassination plans (Somerville's and Parry's) in 1583 and 1585, had roused England to a dangerous temper, and an Association, thousands strong, had pledged itself to pursue to the death any in whose interest Elizabeth's life should be attempted. Philip therefore came to the conclusion that it was unlikely that Mary would survive an invasion.¹ He was quite right, for within a year even the threat of invasion was enough. The Queen's ministers, alarmed by the unceasing plots, gained sufficient backing from public opinion to make the Babington conspiracy final, and forced their mistress to execute Mary in February 1587.

The news of Drake's successes had preceded him, and to complete his work it was advisable to look out for the returning plate-fleets of 1586 and also for the Portuguese carracks bringing home the rich trade of the East Indies. All of this vitally important shipping was expected to approach the Spanish coast by way of the Azores in the late summer. It may very probably have

¹ J. B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth*, Oxford, 1936, p. 338.

been for the purpose of intercepting it that John Hawkins was sent to sea in August with four of the Queen's best 500-ton galleons, another of 150 tons, and pinnaces and merchantmen bringing up the total to eighteen sail. But the original instructions to Hawkins have not been preserved, and the probability rests on the fact that the purpose was obviously a sound one and was in accordance with views that Hawkins was known to hold. There was, on the other hand, another consideration. Throughout the summer Walsingham was unravelling the Babington Plot, although it was not publicly disclosed until the beginning of August. There was reason to believe that the Catholic League in France was promoting Babington, and that the League's forces in Normandy might attempt a raid across the Channel in concert with a rising of the English papists. It may have been primarily for this reason that the government mobilised the strongest squadron the Navy had turned out since Winter had gone to the Irish coast in 1580.

Whatever the purpose, Hawkins put to sea just as Babington was arrested and the country was falling into a delirium of rumours about civil war and invasion. Reports flew that the Queen was murdered, that fighting had begun, and that the Duke of Guise had landed in Sussex. The Queen and her Council knew better, but they were impressed with the danger from France, whether justifiably or infected with the general panic it is hard to say. Certainly a serious invasion would have needed long preparation, of which we should find traces in the records, and it did not need four ships of the line to deal with a petty raid. However, the Council diverted Hawkins (if they had really intended him for the ocean), and on 30 August he was instructed

'to ply up and down' in the Channel and guard the coast. At that occupation they kept him for three weeks, and only then was he allowed to sail southwards for the coast of Spain. He arrived to find that he had just missed the East Indian carracks and the plate-fleets, with the exception of one straggler from the latter, which he captured. The bulk of this richly laden shipping was safe in port, and the rest of the cruise yielded only a number of isolated prizes of no great value. What else Hawkins did or was ordered to do is unknown—perhaps to reconnoitre the preparations which Philip had in hand for the invasion of England. If he did so, he must have learned that they were not yet far advanced. He quitted the coast on a westerly course and was home by the end of October.

By its strength and organisation the expedition was evidently intended for work of importance. Its commander was the head of the Navy Board, and another member, William Borough, was vice-admiral. A Spanish captain taken off Lisbon has recorded that the Queen's galleons were in excellent condition, clean and well kept, with new sails and gear, and lavishly victualled. Hawkins, he says, treated him very kindly, showed him over the flagship, and released him to tell what he had seen. It was still diplomacy rather than war, and good to let the Spaniards know that if they must needs fight they would not find it too easy. Perhaps Hawkins had done all that was expected of him. But if, as certainly appears, a great chance had been missed, the fault was not his but that of statesmen who viewed the fleet mainly as a static line of defence along the coast.

The Queen had mobilised only one-fifth of her Navy in the summer of 1586, when a resolute exercise of sea-power would have yielded a prospect of stopping

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Philip's supplies and forcing him into line with England's wishes. In consequence the initiative passed to him, and for the next two years all English actions attended upon the preparation and despatch of the Armada. Philip had decided on war while Elizabeth hoped for peace, and the King's decision governed the course of events. In response to his orders Santa Cruz produced a detailed plan in March 1586. The design was that the Armada should convey from Spain direct the whole of a great army for the conquest of England, without any necessity for a junction with Parma or the employment of his troops from the Netherlands. The simplicity of this plan was in its favour, but its vastness condemned it. Philip saw no hope of paying for the 60,000 soldiers, 30,000 mariners and 77,000 tons of shipping which Santa Cruz demanded; and ultimately the figures were heavily reduced and Parma's army thrown in to make up some of the deficiency. Even on the lower scale Spain itself did not possess nearly enough tonnage for the task. Much building had to be put in hand in the shipyards, and much requisitioning and hiring in all the ports of Europe under Philip's influence, from the Hanseatic League to the Italian states. The stock of artillery was very low, and the Italian gun-founders had to be set at work, since Spain herself had none. Provisions had to be accumulated and mariners to be enlisted from all the subject-countries. There were few regular troops in Spain, and the *tercios* had to be summoned from Milan and Naples, and Portugal to be denuded of its garrison.

Philip's practice of centralising all decisions in his own cabinet, coupled with the slowness of communication over such long distances, caused all these measures to occupy much time. Before the close of 1586 little

visible progress had been made, although activity was evident in many quarters. In the winter the English government began to receive alarming reports, all pointing to the conclusion that the invasion would be ready to start in the course of 1587. The information was too highly coloured, for it even produced the supposition that the Armada might get to sea in the early summer, and there was no real chance of that. The Queen was sufficiently convinced of the danger, not to mobilise her whole fleet, but to send out Drake with a squadron similar to that of Hawkins, although joined with a heavier contingent of merchantmen and provided with a landing-force of soldiers. It was financed on the joint-stock method, with the Queen, the Lord Admiral, Drake and the merchant companies of London as the principal adventurers. Drake was instructed to impeach the junction of the Spanish fleets from their several ports or to follow and attack them if they should be already on their way towards England, to cut off their supplies of victuals, and (a distinct purpose) to capture the East and West Indian trading fleets; and with these objects he was expressly permitted 'to distress the ships within the havens themselves'. On second thoughts the Queen decided that the last clause was going too far, and sent an order revoking it. But Drake had already sailed out of Plymouth, and the message never reached him.

Expecting the cancellation, Drake had left hurriedly on 2 April 1587, with his victualling in the same disorder as on his previous voyage. He had with him four galleons and two pinnaces of the Queen's, with William Borough as vice-admiral; a small galleon belonging to the Lord Admiral and some other privateers of his own and the Admiral's; four good fighting merchantmen from the Turkey Company, in all essentials ships-of-

war; and other private ships making up the total to twenty-three sail. Altogether there were 4300 tons of shipping and about 2200 men; and since at least nine and perhaps more of the ships were of serious fighting quality, it was the strongest fleet Elizabeth had yet sent to sea. In the command Drake was the Queen's officer, Borough represented especially the Lord Admiral and the regular Navy, and the rear-admiral Robert Flick the London interest. Thus Drake had now reached a commanding position outside and independent of the Navy Board, just as Hawkins had done before he joined that body. There can be little doubt that Drake could have had a seat on the Navy Board had he cared to push for it. But he never did so, and it is fairly evident that he sought to emphasise his position as the leader of the national marine, transcending that of the heads of the Crown's professional establishment as the whole exceeds the part. It was an attitude that the Lord Admiral could not view with entire sympathy.

With a fair wind Drake sighted Finisterre on 5 April. Then a gale scattered the fleet, and it was not re-assembled off Lisbon until the 16th. Lisbon was to be the Armada's port of concentration, and Santa Cruz with a number of ships was already there. But Drake heard of many more at Cadiz, and so went on to seek them before they could move north. On the 19th he was off Cadiz with his best vessels. The others were straggling behind, but he determined to enter the port at once without waiting for them. He sent for Borough and other captains and told them his intention, but gave them no chance of deliberating it in a formal council according to the Navy's practice. Borough protested. Not only did he consider it imprudent to dash pell-mell into Cadiz without methodical preparation, but it was a

violation of the principles of command recognised since Henry VIII had created the Royal Navy. By those principles the council of war was the commanding authority and the admiral its chief executive officer. But Drake had his own views of command and had defined them long ago at Port St. Julian. He cared nothing for traditional principles. He was the exponent of methods new to the Europe of his day, although practised for half a century by the corsairs of the tropics. He went into Cadiz that afternoon, and Borough had to follow.

In Cadiz there was a great fighting galleon belonging to the Marquis of Santa Cruz, many less important vessels destined for service in the Armada, many more fitting out as the next West Indian plate-fleet, and twelve of the oared galleys which at that time were considered very formidable opponents to sailing ships—in all about eighty sail, large and small. But only the galleys were in condition to fight. Few of the others had as yet received their guns or their sea-going crews, and many of the impressed merchantmen had even had their sails removed in case they should desert. The majority of the ships were at anchor in the outer harbour under the guns of the castle and of two batteries on the water-front. Beyond was an inner harbour tailing off into shallow water, and all the northern side opposite the town was also encumbered with shoals, amid which fair-sized vessels could penetrate only with local pilotage. Drake had learnt much concerning these conditions from neutrals, stopped and questioned as he sailed south. He judged that the galleys and batteries were a fair risk, and on that assumption was right to press in without delay. If he had waited for Borough's formal procedure, he would no doubt have made an impressive display of the rules of war, but would have found few

prizes to capture, for they would have been removed out of reach behind the shoals.

The galleys came rowing out to meet Drake as he entered with a fair wind, and the Queen's galleons crushed them with superior fire. One was beached in a sinking condition, two fled into the inner harbour, and the others retired close under the shore batteries. Of the Spanish ships anchored off the town a few escaped into the inner harbour, while the pinnaces and small fry made for the creeks amid the northern shoals. The majority of the larger sort were taken as they lay. Those that could be moved were carried off, and those without sails were relieved of their ladings and fired. The work went on till after nightfall, the shore batteries shooting into the smoke and flames and inflicting very little damage on the English. The *Santa Cruz* galleon was in the inner harbour, and Drake was bent on having her. He anchored his fleet just short of the entrance and beyond range of the town, and in the morning led a flotilla of small craft to the attack. The great ship, helpless for lack of guns, was given to the flames, while Borough, wringing his hands over the folly of tarrying in a narrow fairway exposed to fireships, galleys and the land, withdrew his own vessel and persuaded others to follow him. The galleys, in spite of their punishment, tried again and again but without effect, and the fireships all missed their mark. Meanwhile soldiers were bringing up field-guns along the shore, and at mid-day Drake, having destroyed everything within reach, decided that it was time to go. Then it fell a flat calm, and for fourteen hours he had to remain exposed to all these devices and successfully countering them. The early morning brought a land-breeze fair for sailing out, and out he went, to anchor just clear of Cadiz for another

day while he sorted out the booty and again beat off a galley attack. The galley commanders had certainly done their duty and the result was only a more thorough exposure of the fact that these much-vaunted craft were out of date.

The Spaniards admitted a loss of twenty-four ships, while Drake claimed thirty-seven. It was considerably more than half the tonnage of the eighty vessels in the port, for it was mainly the smaller ones that escaped. The Cadiz division of the gathering Armada had been virtually wiped out, although it was by no means the strongest portion. At Lisbon there were many great vessels, and many more were still in Mediterranean ports, and others again in North Spain. The money value of the damage was about 200,000 ducats, which Philip could ill afford; and indirectly his loss was higher, for the great financiers lost confidence and raised the interest at which he could borrow. The blow at prestige was obvious, but there was more than that. Spanish captains had never seen war conducted in this fashion, and they were shaken. They did not lose courage, but from this time on they steadily lost the certainty of success; and when next year they at last set forward for England, it was hardly in the mood of men about to enjoy a glorious victory but almost in that of the doomed soldiers of a lost cause.

From the information he had gained Drake realised that a great part of the Armada and its men, and nearly all its supplies and artillery, had still to come round from the Mediterranean to Lisbon. In order to 'impeach the gathering', he therefore determined to cruise off Cape St. Vincent, the great salient angle of land which lies between Lisbon and the Straits of Gibraltar. For a century past this had been a recognised station

for cruisers awaiting their prey, and Drake had hit upon nothing new in adopting it. His biographers have done his memory some disservice in insisting upon the originality of his ideas, for even if true that would be no great merit. Strategical ideas are cheap enough, and hundreds of people evolve them in every war. The great strategist is not necessarily the originator but the wielder of that much rarer talent, the correct assessment of the ways and means that make a plan feasible or futile. There lay Drake's genius, the clear sight which revealed in true proportion every factor affecting his own movements, and the insight or disciplined imagination which enabled him to see ways and means and information through the enemy's eyes also, and to judge how his enemy's mind would react to them. And never did his mastery shine more brilliantly than in 1587. The Spaniards symbolised it in their saying that Drake had a magic mirror in which he could see fleets and armies moving hundreds of miles away.

At St. Vincent were half-a-dozen ships which Spain had been able to equip, and these made off to Lisbon at Drake's approach. To remain at this station Drake needed a watering-place and an anchorage under the Cape to yield shelter from the prevalent northerly winds. The landings were fortified, but he determined to seize them and remove their guns. Here Borough intervened with a formal written protest, that Drake was not consulting his council and that an attempt to capture the forts would be disastrously repulsed. To Borough the whole thing was folly and its motive the vainglory of insulting the King of Spain on his own soil. Drake saw in Borough's letter a challenge to his authority, the revolt of the professional Navy against the commander who had not sprung from its service.

He had hitherto tolerated Borough's alarms and despondencies. Now he believed that he must put his foot down or see his plans ruined, the more especially as he was himself on the verge of exceeding his instructions; for the Queen had sanctioned his entry into Spanish ports, but this was not quite the same as landing on Spanish soil.¹ He ordered Borough into arrest, to remain a prisoner in his ship the *Golden Lion*, to which a new captain was appointed.

On 4 May Drake landed a thousand men to take the little port of Lagos. They found it too strong to attack and returned with nothing done. Next day the fleet moved to Sagres, nearer to the point of the Cape. There Drake took personal command and led his men to a desperate feat of arms, the capture by storm of Sagres Castle, which looked impregnable to assailants without artillery. With his own hands he piled faggots against the gate and fired them, and when the gate crumbled the garrison surrendered. Three adjacent forts yielded without a struggle. All were 'defaced' and their guns thrown over the cliffs to the beach, whence they were carried off to the ships. In the rugged and sparsely peopled country the Spanish authorities could not bring up guns and troops in any measurable time, and Drake had the Sagres anchorage for as long as he cared to use it.

Having made sure of Cape St. Vincent, he went north to Lisbon to seek action with Santa Cruz. But the unhappy Marquis had ships without guns or men. The taunts of Drake would not induce him to come out. Drake on his side would not attempt to go in, for

¹ Difficult as it is for us to appreciate it now, there was undoubtedly a diplomatic distinction between the two proceedings. It must still be remembered that the Queen was not seeking to make war but to avert war. Drake was conducting his own policy, not hers.

Lisbon was more heavily fortified than Cadiz, and its pilotage so intricate that any mishap might become a disaster. Having thus found that Santa Cruz was unready, Drake returned to St. Vincent and remained there until May 23. During all this time his light craft were destroying the Portuguese fishing boats which were to play their part in victualling the Armada, and capturing the coasters taking stores to Lisbon. Among these stores were barrel-staves from the Mediterranean sufficient to make casks for a vast quantity of meat and drink. The seasoned staves could not be replaced, and next year the Armada sailed with leaky casks.

A few days after Drake had written home that he meant to stay indefinitely about Cape St. Vincent he suddenly sailed for the Azores. He had ensured that the Armada would not begin to concentrate again for some time, and his orders included action against the Indies fleets. He had heard that a great carrack from the East was about due at the islands, and he may well have judged that a rich prize would be his best answer to the Queen on the matter of landing at Sagres without authority. Whether he intended to resume the blockade at St. Vincent after a visit to the islands we cannot tell, but probably he did not, unless reinforcements should be sent to him. By this time many men were sick and victuals were low, and the fleet was approaching its limit of endurance. That this should be so after two months' service argues considerable carelessness in victualling at the outset, especially as foodstuffs had been captured at Cadiz. However that may have been, he sent home the sick in some of the ships and sailed westward with the others. Immediately a gale scattered them, and several hungry ships turned for home instead of rejoining. On 26 May ten of the

best, including all the Queen's galleons, reassembled, but shortly afterwards the *Golden Lion*, on pretence of chasing a strange sail, bore away northwards and deserted. Her captain came back to Drake in a pinnace, saying that the crew had mutinied because they were short-handed and starving; and the captain had preferred to leave the ship rather than desert his admiral. William Borough was still on board the *Golden Lion*, and Drake assumed that he had stirred up the mutiny. He summoned a court-martial, which condemned Borough to death in his absence.

By a remarkable stroke of luck Drake's appearance at the Azores coincided with that of the great carrack *San Felipe* from the Indian Ocean. On 8 June, near St. Michaels, she sailed straight into his arms, and after several hours' fighting she was taken. She was worth £114,000, more than double the cost of the whole expedition, and it was a peculiar satisfaction to Drake, if not to the Queen, that the ship herself and most of her cargo belonged to the Crown of Portugal, that is, to Philip II. The previous booty brought up the total haul of the voyage to £140,000, of which the Queen took £40,000, the London merchants £40,000 and Drake £17,000, leaving the remainder to minor adventurers. These were the gross shares in the distribution, from which the expenses had to be deducted, but the net profits were very great.

With the taking of the carrack Drake wound up his campaign. He arrived at Plymouth on 26 June. Four days afterwards Santa Cruz, having collected guns and stores for about forty vessels of all sorts, sailed from Lisbon for the Azores; for the carrack was only one unit of a crowd of wealthy shipping which it was essential to shepherd home. Philip was still bent on

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invading England that year, but he had first to protect his convoys, and so he sent off Santa Cruz on a mission that turned out to be unnecessary. It was the culminating disaster caused by Drake's lightning movements, for in the outcome it meant that the Armada could not sail. When Santa Cruz came back in October, the King ordered him to proceed at once with the invasion. But it could not be done. Men and stores were exhausted and ships required refitting, and there was no hope of supplying these wants before winter set in. So the Armada remained in Philip's ports consuming his treasure, while doubt gnawed the hearts of his captains.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ARMADA

DRAKE had returned to Plymouth hoping to add reinforcements to his depleted squadron and sail again to the Spanish coast, there to continue indefinitely the work of immobilising the Armada. He found no prospect of doing so. The Queen and her Council were embarrassed by his successes. On their assumption that Philip might still be induced to negotiate, Drake had gone too far. He had so damaged Spanish prestige that Spanish pride might not rest satisfied without a fight. In particular it was feared that the landing at Sagres and the taunts hurled at Santa Cruz to induce him to come out of Lisbon would prove intolerable. Drake was therefore coldly received, and word was sent to Parma that his violation of Spanish territory had been done without the Queen's orders and against her wish, and that she was greatly offended by it. As we have seen, this was strictly true. Burghley, who never in his life overcalled his own hand, was especially disgusted with 'the indiscreet brags and opprobrious words' launched at Santa Cruz. To the diplomatic mind they were simple folly, since they deepened hostility without giving any visible advantage. And so in sum England apologised for having given her enemy a hard punch instead of a warning tap. It was all unnecessary, for Philip's determination had long been fixed, and he never wavered from it.

Drake and his opponents came to grips over the case

of William Borough, who had reached home in the mutinous *Golden Lion* some time in advance of his commander. Drake seems seriously to have expected that Borough would be hanged. On the question of the mutiny there was hard swearing by the accusers and allegations of subornation by the defence, and the enquiry did not go far enough for a conclusion to be reached. On the prior offence, the protest against the landing at Cape St. Vincent, the government supported Borough. The Lord Admiral's opinion is not directly recorded, but may be inferred from the fact that after the case was quashed in December Borough was reinstated in command of his ship. He remains on the books as captain of the *Golden Lion* until February 1588. This formal vindication of an officer, whose general performance even his friends must have considered feeble, can only have been intended as a snub to Drake, the retort of the Navy Board to one whose pretensions were threatening to overshadow it.

Lord Charles Howard of Effingham was just under fifty years of age when he succeeded the Earl of Lincoln as Lord Admiral in 1585. His family had long been connected with the Navy, his father having been Lord Admiral under Mary, and two other Howards successively holders of the office under Henry VIII. It used formerly to be stated that he was a Catholic, but the evidence is conclusive that he was not. Although he had seen no great service at sea, he had made himself well acquainted with the administration of the fleet and even with the individual condition of its ships; in other words, he had prepared himself as far as he had opportunity for the great command which he was now to take. He admired and supported Hawkins, and it is probably no mere coincidence that when Howard took office the

attacks of the Navy Board upon its Treasurer ceased and harmony reigned thenceforward. Howard's best qualities, as the Armada campaign was to show, were his loyalty and generosity to his subordinates, absence of the pride that will not take advice, and the tact and moderation that enabled him to lead a difficult team. He laid no claim to brilliant generalship, but in a sense displayed it by using simply and directly the means at his disposal to an end that could not have been better attained. It is no more than the truth to rank him as the greatest of all the Lord Admirals until the office became extinct in the early eighteenth century.

As we have seen, Philip intended to proceed with the invasion in the autumn of 1587. Parma was at that time eager for it, believing that the English were so unready in the Narrow Seas that even a moderate Spanish force would be sufficient to gain command. It seems that Spain could have sent out a reduced Armada in October, but Santa Cruz himself was the obstacle. He had never trusted greatly in the junction with Parma and desired to embark with the maximum force that Spain itself could produce. Parma had captured Sluys in August and already had Nieuport and Dunkirk, but none of these ports could shelter a fleet of great ships. Flushing, the most desirable base, was still in the hands of the Dutch. Elizabeth has been criticised for neglecting to mobilise her fleet in view of the possibility of the Armada's sailing, and defended on the ground that there would have been sufficient time to do so after certain news was received. Such was the efficiency of the service that all the Queen's ships could be and were turned out manned and ready for sea in a fortnight or three weeks, but the defence of the Queen does not explain why, after omitting this step in October,

she took it in December when the immediate danger was certainly no greater. The truth is that the Queen's actions fluctuated in accordance with the foreign news, much of it very untrustworthy. She would fight in extremity, but hoped to avoid fighting, and so the initiative together with the decision lay with Philip. He kept her guessing, although he took no great pains to do so.

In December the certainty of war was the prevailing view. Every ship in the Medway was mobilised, with Howard in command and Hawkins and Frobisher under him. Sir Henry Palmer with some smaller vessels was watching the Flemish ports. Drake at Plymouth was to have seven of the Queen's galleons and twenty-three merchantmen for some offensive stroke like that of the previous year, to raid the Spanish ports and even to land Don Antonio and stir up a Portuguese revolt. Hawkins had asked for the western command, his old post in the crisis of the Ridolfi Plot, but Drake had clearly proved his title to it; and Hawkins, moreover, had no belief in the utility of Don Antonio. In December he wrote, 'I wish . . . that we have as little to do in foreign countries as may be (but of me e necessity), for that breedeth great charge and no profit at all'; and the Lord Admiral agreed with him. Drake therefore retained the western post, but it was the end of January in 1588 before his ships were all in hand, and by then the situation had changed.

No sooner, in fact, had Elizabeth been convinced that war was inevitable than a fresh gleam of hope appeared. News came that Philip had yielded to Santa Cruz and postponed his sailing until March, and the Queen sought desperately to use the respite to strike a bargain. Dignity forbade her to approach the King

directly, but it could be done through Parma and the Dutch under the guise of mediation. In mid-January Howard was ordered to discharge half his men, although not to lay up his ships, Drake was stayed, and with all speed a meeting was arranged at Flushing between representatives of England, Parma and the Dutch to discuss the terms of a truce. For six weeks the Queen hoped, and then in March it was seen to be an illusion. Philip had never slackened his preparations and was positively determined to proceed. The negotiations had been a diplomatic success in securing him the necessary respite from Drake, but he had never meant to make peace.

So much was apparent on 30 March, when Drake wrote from Plymouth asking that he should be strengthened to fifty sail and sent to seek battle on the coast of Spain. It was no longer a question as in '87 of dislocating incomplete preparations, but of fighting the concentrated Spanish might. Obviously such a task would have involved the use of the bulk of the Queen's Navy, and Drake would have been its master. In mid-April he wrote again with fuller explanation of his plan, and again assumed that he would be in command, drawing to the West the fighting strength of England and leaving to the Lord Admiral a mere titular authority and the guard of the Narrow Seas. The distribution was sound enough and accorded with the views of all the sea-captains, but the personal question threatened a crisis. Drake knew it, and in his letter made pointed reference to his doubts of the Navy men and whether they could be trusted to support him.¹ The Queen and her Council may have been ignorant of sea warfare, but they were sure judges of men. Here was the pro-

¹ Quoted in Corbett, II, 142.

spect of a schism opening in a
 Their answer was to order How
 the whole fleet, saving only t
 squadron, there to join Drake a
 mand.

Drake, to his honour, submit
 His whole temperament and hi
 confidence and hatred of control,
 lightning decisions which he co
 slower men, the habit of curt com
 ment, all the qualities which the s
 fighting nature, these prompted a
 discipline prevailed over all, and the
 knuckled down to play his part in th
 choice of a patriot. If he had made hi
 he would either have been relegated
 employment away from the main fleet
 secured substantial command of it.
 England's effort would have been m
 generality would have been dismayed l
 and the professional Navy officers woul
 under his control. As it was, he played
 with an admirable cheerfulness, and th
 jealousies that lurked beneath the surface
 fighting captains of diverse origins and fie
 feelings never raised their heads until th
 was won. Howard made it easy for him,
grand seigneur to perfection—one can imagin
 outcome had a Leicester or an Essex stood in
 They met at Plymouth with solemn ceremon
 ritual of flags and salutes. Thenceforward H
 the leader and a great peril had passed. In
 Lord Admiral wrote to Walsingham, asking hi
 a letter of thanks to Drake for his loving an

to the Queen's service and his

of May before Howard reached : Drake had been up to London sive, and Howard, at first doubt-wkins, to judge from his remarks for it. When Howard arrived at majority were in favour of it. question was debated, and in the ment objector were for sailing for thout delay. It would be interesting of the dissentient, evidently a man His view has been condemned by tors, but was justified by the event. i conditions, political, economic and he offensive failed to locate the Armada

awn from Corbett, II, 152-6, but his interpretation He holds that Drake was the real commander in , control was nothing but 'a courtly fiction', and that gham proves it: 'That an Admiral in command of a is Vice-Admiral to be thanked semi-officially for recog-admits of but one interpretation'. But Drake was being ing well when he had it in his power to give trouble. r holds this to be but one instance among many of the rbett's account of the Armada by an assumption which not support. That assumption was made also by the ntemporaries who did not know what was actually taking ad heard much more of Drake than of Howard. The latter ied in the vein of Marshal Joffre when someone tactlessly really won the Battle of the Marne: 'Who won it? If it had I know very well who would have lost it!' Nevertheless it by for any later writer to dissent from Sir Julian Corbett .cknowledging that his brilliant research, added to that of ghton, first provided the material on which any other inter-t be based.

uggests that it may have been Frobisher. It was not Borough, n transferred from the *Golden Lion* to the only galley in the ice and set to perform guardship duty in the Thames—possibly actical humour in view of his known respect for galleys, and also avoid seating him at the same council table with Drake.

and ended in the English being caught at a disadvantage, whereupon the Armada itself was more thoroughly ruined by the greater disadvantage of fighting far from home than it could ever have been by a defeat near its own ports. The offensive, even now that the Armada was reported to be ready for action, had all the moral factors in its favour but some serious physical ones against it. For in those days of epidemics and under-victualling every week at sea entailed some deterioration. No one in Howard's council could have been ignorant that Drake's force in 1587, in spite of all the exaltation his leadership had yielded, had lasted only two months before practically going to pieces. It was a problem of weighing the moral against the material.

Mention of the council introduces the question of the command in the Armada year. Howard exercised it on the ancient principle laid down by Henry VIII, that the Admiral should act on general policies discussed and approved by the captains in conclave. Drake's innovation of the previous year was not continued. Its undoubted efficiency was offset by the friction which it generated, and, contemporary men and ideas being what they were, there was no hope that the friction could be obviated. Howard also, in his comparative inexperience, admitted that he needed advice. He was not, like the rest, a man who had spent long years at sea. On the other hand, they all shared with him the disadvantage of never having handled or even seen a great fleet in action with a worthy opponent. Howard, then, wisely used his council, but he compromised with the new doctrine by reducing its size. The old practice had been for every captain to have a voice. Howard reduced the meeting to seven besides himself—Drake, Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Sheffield, Sir Roger Williams,

Hawkins, Frobisher and Thomas Fenner. It was a skilful choice, representing all interests. Fenner was one of Drake's men prominent in 1587. The two lords stood for the Court interest and Howard's own connection (Sheffield was his son-in-law). Williams was a soldier of repute, and was actually called home for land service before the fighting began. Hawkins, like Howard himself, represented the Navy Board. Frobisher must have been included mainly on his merits as a great seaman and tried commander, and perhaps in special sympathy with the mariners of the mercantile marine. Under Howard's guidance these men did pull together, although they were not all friends, and the service at large was satisfied that it was not being governed exclusively in one interest. The transaction is incidentally a commentary on Tudor despotism.

What took place in the two months after the junction at Plymouth was briefly as follows. Howard arrived with permission to act as he saw fit. He was eager to sail for Spain, but his victuallers had not come from the Thames. This and head winds delayed him until 30 May. Then he got to sea, only to run into hard winds reaching gale force from the south-west. By 6 June he was driven back and had to enter Plymouth to avoid being blown up Channel. While at sea he had learned that the Armada had left Lisbon on 14 May. Meanwhile the government were growing alarmed lest the Armada should slip past the English fleet at sea, and sent orders that Howard was to take up some position which would cover the approaches to England, Ireland and Scotland alike. Howard replied on 14 June that there was no such position and that Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher all agreed with him that it was best to seek the Armada on the Spanish coast, since if it had really started a month

earlier it had evidently come to grief and put back. Just after sending off this dispatch he received another from the Queen with positive orders not to go to Spain and the old injunction to 'ply up and down' and cover all approaches. Howard answered with some heat, implying that the order was ridiculous and again saying that he was acting on the best advice. He was now almost out of victuals, but managed to sail again on 19 June, only to be driven back two days later. On this cruise he learned that Spanish ships had been seen near Scilly. The Queen now relented and gave him a free hand, and small supplies of food also arrived. Howard sailed once more on 24 June, but the wind soon turned foul, and for some days the fleet was just holding its own strung out across the Channel entrance. When the wind came fair again, according to Corbett it needed a protest from Drake to urge Howard forward, which accords ill with the Lord Admiral's letters.¹ The southern course was taken on 7 July, but when still short of the Spanish coast the fleet was driven back by a strong head wind and re-entered Plymouth for the last time on 12 July, very short of food and with many sick. It was now certain that the Armada had made a false start and had been roughly treated by the weather. At Plymouth all were working hard to get victualled for sea again, with visions of the Spaniards scattered into their ports and the plate-fleets approaching Europe unescorted and easy to be snapped up. And then on 19 July came the news that the whole Armada was off the Lizard and in a few hours would be off Plymouth.

When Philip in December had reluctantly agreed to

¹ Mr. Oppenheim gives evidence that Howard needed no urging and had formed his decision to sail south independently of Drake—*Monson's Tracts*, vol. I, 163 n.

postpone the invasion to the spring, the Armada had virtually reached its maximum strength, for all efforts of recruitment and resources of the dockyards were barely sufficient to make good the running wastage of men, gear and victuals. Santa Cruz required something better and worked himself to death in trying to obtain it. He died early in February. His loss was a blow, but not so great a disaster as it has often been represented. He was old and inelastic, and all the evidence shows that he had little understanding of the novel conditions that he would have met. His successor, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, took the command unwillingly and protested that he had no competence for it. History has taken him too much at his own modest valuation, for when it came to the point he showed himself to be a loyal and gallant man who probably did as well as any other could have done. His incompetence was that of all Spain. The Armada was not a real fighting fleet at all, but a collection of weakly armed ships conveying a fighting army. Fifty years earlier, in the days of 'armies by sea', it could have done useful work, but meanwhile the Elizabethans had created a Navy.

Medina Sidonia, supported by the King, put in a great deal of hard work, and by May had got the Armada as ready as it would ever be. Altogether it counted 130 ships, but these gross numbers are meaningless on both sides, for the majority of the vessels were store-ships, transports and small scouting craft. Laughton calculates that the efficient men-of-war were not more than 50 and probably fewer, and though many were of galleon build their high superstructures rendered them less weatherly than the English galleons, while they had smaller and fewer guns. Santa Cruz had designed the Armada to win by boarding the enemy, as

he had defeated Strozzi at Terceira. In such an action the high-charged ships had the advantage, while artillery was relatively unimportant, and chief reliance was placed upon trained and well led soldiers to cross the decks of vessels grappled side by side. The soldiers were therefore more than twice as numerous as the mariners, and though these troops might in the end land upon England's soil, their first function was to beat the English Navy. It was not for lack of warning that Spain adopted this policy. Philip and his counsellors had been told again and again that the English would not join in a stationary *mêlée*. It should have been obvious that floating barracks could not catch mobile ships, but the inertia of traditional practice could not be overcome. The orders were to board and win a soldier's battle, and to do so God would help his own. Terceira and Lepanto stood as vindication of the Spanish method.

With his polyglot force of Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians and Flemings, Medina Sidonia sailed from Lisbon on 20 May. His tonnage totalled about 58,000, his mariners 8000, and his landsmen about 22,000.¹ By English practice the mariners were far too few for the task before them, especially as their ships were unhandy and heavy to work. In the Netherlands Parma was awaiting them, but his army had declined to 17,000 from the 30,000 at which it had stood in the previous year. He thought that the chance had been lost in the autumn and no longer believed in success. He could not in any case take all his men to England, and even with a proportion of troops from the Armada the land-

¹ Laughton's figures. Corbett estimates that sickness and desertion had reduced the grand total of men by about 3000 before the Armada sighted the English coast.

ing-force would not be overwhelming. Moreover the blockade of his coast was tightening, and the lack of a good port of assembly seemed more serious as the time approached. Altogether Parma would have been glad to hear that the enterprise had been abandoned. He was not alone in that opinion. From 20 May to 9 June the Armada struggled against head winds on its own coast and consumed so much food and water that Medina Sidonia decided to go into Corunna. As he was doing so, a gale scattered some of the ships to adjacent ports and inflicted heavy damages and leaks; and one division did not receive the orders and went on to the rendezvous at the Scillies, whence it had to be fetched back. From Corunna the Duke and most of his council sent word to Philip that the expedition ought to be given up. Philip would not consent. For more than a month Medina Sidonia lay at Corunna collecting victuals and repairing damages. It was during this month that Howard was trying to strike him; and the record of Howard's movements shows that it was not the Queen's hesitation but the weather that prevented him from doing so.

On 12 July the Armada sailed again, and this time the wind was fair. At 4 P.M. on the 19th Medina Sidonia sighted the Lizard and was then under the impression that only a part of the English fleet must be in Plymouth. At about the same time a swift scout brought to Howard the news that the enemy were upon him.¹ Thus began the ten vital days in which the whole fortune of England

¹ The game of bowls does not rest on contemporary evidence but has been traced as early as 1624, when survivors of the event were living. Drake's famous retort has not so good a history and does not appear until the eighteenth century. It looks like a myth, for Drake was hardly the man to suggest waste of time at a juncture when disaster might conceivably be averted by minutes.

and the Reformation was at stake, days in which the victory of the assailants would have meant annihilation to Protestantism, but victory for the defenders meant only that it would survive without annihilating its rival. The course of the struggle is surprisingly ill recorded. We have the result plainly enough, and an outline of the events, but the details are a muddle that will never be properly elucidated. To attempt some understanding it is necessary to be clear on what either side was trying to do, and then to follow the hazy record with attention to the facts of geography and weather which played a governing part in the story.

When Medina Sidonia received his orders from Philip, the junction of Howard and Drake was unknown and it was assumed that Drake in the west was in command of the minor part of the English force, while Howard would be in the Narrow Seas with the rest, including most of the Queen's powerful ships. The Armada was instructed not to enter any English port on the south coast, but to make its way up Channel as directly as possible, although if it found an opportunity of defeating Drake in the process it was to do so. Having reached 'the Cape of Margate' (the North Foreland), and presumably having routed Howard, the Armada was to seize a landing-place and convoy Parma's army to England in its flotilla of light-draught transports, adding to it a proportion of the soldiers brought from Spain. The landing would thus be made in the Downs or on the North Kent coast near Margate, and the Armada would need not merely to have scored a success over the English but to have driven them completely out of the Narrow Seas. In the event of bad weather or of prolonged operations against Howard, there was no available port on Parma's coast in which

the Armada could wait or refit. Terceira and Lepanto dominated Philip's mind; one day's fighting was to annihilate English sea-power. In fact, from the light way in which the possibilities of a battle are passed over by the King, it may even be suspected that he thought the English might melt away without a fight.

To effect these purposes the Spanish leaders devised a sailing formation which they practised with military precision from the moment of arriving off Plymouth. In front as they advanced eastwards (towards Howard, as was assumed) was their main battle, containing their best ships keeping line abreast under Medina Sidonia himself. Next came the small auxiliaries and storeships and weakly armed transports. Behind them, on their left and right rear respectively were two smaller fighting squadrons also in line abreast, to ward off attacks upon the transports from any English who might follow. The Armada was thus disposed like an army on land advancing through hostile country, with its main enemy ahead but with the likelihood that its flanks and rear might be harassed by irregulars emerging from the bush, in this case the south coast ports. When we reflect that the ships were a mixed lot and that most of the shipmasters had never done anything of the sort before, it seems surprising that this military formation, with ships in line abreast keeping their dressing and squadrons following one another keeping their distance, could ever have been carried out; and yet undoubtedly it was. The explanation lies in the extreme slowness of the advance. From Plymouth to Calais is 240 sea miles. The distance was covered in seven days. Deducting one whole day for calms and another for time lost in fighting, it would seem that the passage occupied five days of actual sailing with fair although light winds.

THE ARMADA

The average speed was thus two knots, and we must picture the Armada as preserving its formation by sailing with bare steerage way under very reduced canvas, with the military commanders vigilant to see station kept and the mariners at perpetual sail drill in order to check or increase speed according to the local variations of the wind's force. Even so the feat is something of a miracle and shows what discipline the Spanish soldier-captains could command.

There are no orders on record from the English government to Howard; and since the Armada's approach was a surprise, there was no time for any to be issued to fit the actual situation in the Channel. Howard and his captains were thus left to play their game unhindered. It consisted in trying to break up the Armada with their guns, and to prevent Medina Sidonia from seizing a port on the south coast. The second proved easy, for the Duke was forbidden to take a port, but the first was difficult. The preliminary rounds showed Howard that he could easily keep out of trouble but that he was not doing much damage to his opponent, and the English resigned themselves to dogging the Armada to its destination, knowing that its greatest difficulties would then be apparent. During the process the Armada was slightly losing strength and the English were gaining it by reinforcements out of the ports, with the further prospect of a substantial increase by a junction with the blockaders of Parma, forty ships of all sizes under Lord Henry Seymour and Sir William Winter. Although the English roll was even more inflated than that of the Spaniards with crowds of vessels that were really non-combatants, their number of genuine fighting ships was about the same, fifty, more or less, of which rather more than half were the

Queen's; and this full strength was not attained until Seymour joined Howard off Calais.

When Medina Sidonia sighted the Lizard, he checked his speed to enable his stragglers to close up and get into the determined formation. Thus, although the wind was at south-west, he was next morning still to windward of Plymouth. The visibility was poor and nothing had been seen of the English, who were supposed to be still in the port. At a council some of Medina Sidonia's captains were for entering Plymouth Sound and crushing Drake in the trap by superior weight. They did not yet know that Howard was with Drake, but even on the assumption that only a minor English force was there the Duke would not attempt it, for his instructions positively forbade it. While the council was sitting the English were making its debate needless, for all through the night of the 19th and the morning of the 20th they were warping out of the Catwater and beating out of the Sound. By mid-day Howard with most of his ships was miles out to sea and lying just east of the Eddystone, which might conveniently have accounted for one or two Spaniards had they come on to attack him. In the misty weather they did not see him until the air cleared at sunset, and then it was apparent that there would be no catching Drake in a *cul de sac*. However, they had the windward position, and it seemed that they could go forward with the prospect that Drake must flee or engage in the close action they desired. That night some captured fishermen revealed that it was not only Drake but Howard and the best of the fleet with whom they had to deal. It was a shock, but worse was to follow, for during the darkness Howard led his fleet southwards across the front of the Spaniards and then worked past them up

wind so that in the morning he and not they had the weather-gauge. The Spaniards had seen nothing of this movement. All they had noticed in the moonlight had been a few ships, late in getting out of Plymouth, working up to windward between them and the land; and these duly joined Howard in the morning.

The revelation of the sailing powers of the English ships must have spelt disaster to the seamen in the Armada. The English witnesses say nothing about their own sailing order, and the Spaniards only vaguely describe it as a long line. But no military formation would have survived the night's zig-zag movements, and Corbett deduces that the English sailed in line ahead, which permitted more looseness and much greater speed and mobility. Corbett's interpretation is undoubtedly right, and clear instances of the line ahead as an English custom are to be found in the previous thirty years. Since the middle of the century English fleets had been commanded by sailors, not soldiers, and had ceased to practise the methods of an army by sea.

In the morning of the 21st occurred the first fight. Medina Sidonia edged in towards Plymouth, perhaps to cut off some of the English vessels which had yet to get clear of the Sound and join their fleet. Howard attacked the rear of the Spaniards, sailing past the shoreward end of it and firing as his ships passed it in succession. Either system then showed its virtues. The English inflicted great damage by concentrating on one or two selected victims, but had to keep on the move and could not capture the injured vessels. The very slow average speed of the Spaniards enabled them to preserve unbroken order and call out from their ranks certain of the best ships to show a bold front where the English onslaught was hottest. Medina Sidonia in person took part in this

rescue work with his flagship the *San Martin*, and it is evident that he and his most conspicuous captains were able to move freely to the points where they were most needed without the general formation of the Armada being broken up. It was not an encouraging day for either side. One Spaniard had suffered heavily from the English fire, another had been crippled by a collision, and a third accidentally wrecked by an explosion of her magazine; and two of these three had afterwards to be abandoned to the English. They on their side were a little dashed by the Armada's solid resistance and unbroken continuance upon its course, and one captain wrote that the attack was 'more coldly done' than was altogether creditable. Some had evidently counted on making shorter work than now seemed likely.

Both sides had much to think about, and Medina Sidonia summoned his council as the Armada drifted slowly on past Plymouth. His captains told him that it was folly to proceed up Channel without securing a port, and Martinez de Recalde said further that the port must be as far west as possible. He had no faith in the possibility of joining Parma and wished to revert to the plan favoured by Santa Cruz, of drawing the army of invasion from Spain. Medina Sidonia could not entertain so revolutionary a piece of disobedience and compromised by talking of seizing the Isle of Wight. From that base, with Spithead as an anchorage, it might be possible by means yet undevised to get into touch with Parma.

Which would have been Recalde's port is a very interesting question, for in it lay the seeds of a peril to England. It could not now be Plymouth, and the next place was Dartmouth. Dartmouth, however, had a fortified and very narrow entrance through which it would

have been impossible to pass the whole Armada in one tide or perhaps even two, while its outer anchorage, the Range, was too small and exposed to onshore winds and cross tides, and therefore to fireships. Probably Recalde, if he knew the Channel well enough, had Torbay in his mind, for it was the best place. For there, between the projecting points of Berry Head and Hope's Nose were three miles of perfect anchorage, with virtually no tidal current and approachable only from the eastward. There the Armada could have lain in its battle order, untouchable by the dreaded fireships so long as the westerly weather prevailed, and with good landing-places behind it for its troops to disembark. The English fleet could have attacked only from the disadvantageous leeward position, and a battle would have become the close action Spain desired. Undoubtedly the prospects of perhaps 10,000 Spanish troops landed two hundred miles from London would not have been brilliant, but it was the only chance they were ever to have, and it was the sort of service they were trained for. The thing was certainly a possibility, and it had been no exaggerated precaution on the Queen's part to keep ashore two well-known fighting captains like Grenville and Raleigh to organise the levies of the south-west.

Howard's fleet had been scattered in the fighting of the 21st, and it was not until midnight that he was ready to take up the chase—but the Armada, as has been explained, moved very slowly. Howard ordered Drake to lead and all others to follow his light. But Drake, for reasons never adequately explained, extinguished the *Revenge's* lantern some time before dawn and turned aside to a minor enterprise of his own.¹ The consequence

¹ Space does not permit examination of the controversy on Drake's action, for which see Corbett, II, pp 229-34. Corbett accepts Drake's explana-

was a complete scattering of the English fleet. Some captains, having lost Drake's lead, hove-to until dawn should reveal the position. Others followed Howard who continued to press the chase, 'with more zeal than judgment', Corbett remarks. One might amend the comment to 'with equal zeal and judgment', for Howard must have had the Torbay possibility in his mind. Daylight found him abreast of Berry Head and within shot of the Armada, with most of his own fleet straggling miles behind. It was an anxious juncture, and it was with relief that Howard saw his enemy continue eastwards without making any move towards the Torbay. Medina Sidonia, obedient to the cold hand of that cetic in the Escorial, had missed a chance.¹ ur

All day the Armada went on, with Portland as the next salient point on the English coast. From Berry Head to Portland Bill is forty miles, and at nightfall on the 22nd when the wind died out both fleets were just past Portland. Perhaps 45 miles had been covered in eighteen hours, average $2\frac{1}{2}$ knots, the Armada setting the pace. No one records what the tide was doing when all were becalmed, but in those parts the tides do a great deal, and the proximity of the Shambles and Portland Race must have been interesting. None of these factors are alluded to by any of the witnesses to

tion of the necessity to investigate some strange ships seen in the moonlight beating westwards. Others, notably Frobisher, did not accept it, and Frobisher voiced his doubts in characteristically offensive terms. In the morning Drake was far in the rear but in possession of a rich prize, the Spaniard who had lost his mast by collision on the previous day.

¹ A century later in 1688, William III's Dutch seamen, expecting pursuit by an English fleet, chose Torbay as the best place on the south coast for his disembarkation. He landed with 15,000 men and marched triumphantly to the throne. A large party in England was in his favour, but so according to the calculations of the Spaniards was a party in theirs. They were confident that their landing would be the signal for a Catholic rising.

what took place on the 23rd, and accordingly the 'Battle off Portland' remains very imperfectly explained. Corbett has given us the best reconstruction of the vague and conflicting accounts emanating from the two sides, but he treats the vicinity of Portland as a geographical vacuum of still water innocent of dangers, and his rationalisation must be accepted with reserve. Frobisher, being hostile to Drake, is not highly rated for intelligence by Corbett, who assigns to him throughout the campaign the rôle of the hard-fighting blunderer. So here, when Frobisher is discovered close to Portland Bill, separated from his own fleet and drawing upon his little group a great press of Spanish ships, he gets no credit for anything but indiscreet valour. It is just possible that Frobisher, who knew his Channel as well as any man, was engaged in some subtlety in which the Race or the Shambles and the swift tide were to play their part, but there is no surviving evidence one way or the other.

Such being the lack of testimony, all that can now be said of the Portland action is that, in Camden's words, 'it was managed with confusion enough'. With the morning a light air arose, veering in summer fashion from east through south to south-west and strengthening from that quarter as the day advanced. The English operated in groups following the lead of the principal captains, while Medina Sidonia led a fighting group of his own best galleons and strove to ward off the attempts to break up the Armada's order. With a general drift eastwards as the wind settled in the south-west the fighting went on until the late afternoon, and both sides fired away so much ammunition as to be seriously short thenceforward. The English groups passed and repassed their opponents in lines ahead and inflicted

many casualties, but they did not capture or disable a single ship. The Spaniards made a much less effective reply but, protected by the personal exertions of their Duke, substantially preserved their formation. Then, when both sides had had enough of it, the passage up Channel continued as before. The English had it in their power to force on a battle at any time, but they attempted nothing serious for the next thirty-six hours. They were all the time being joined by new men and minor ships and were sending ashore urgent demands for ammunition.

During those thirty-six hours some forty miles were covered, the wind in early morning and late evening being very light, but always apparently from some westerly quarter; and at daybreak on 25 July the fleets were becalmed some miles south of St. Katherine's Point and Dunnose in the Isle of Wight. The group system which the English seem to have spontaneously adopted at Portland was thought a good arrangement, and Howard during the off-day of the 24th formally divided the fleet into four squadrons under himself, Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher, each with a proportion of fighting ships and auxiliaries. Similarly Medina Sidonia formed his fighting vessels into a strong rear-guard sailing in the favoured lines abreast, while the others, in effect the convoy, were sent on in front in a less rigid formation which appeared to the English as 'a plump or roundel'.

In the morning calm of the 25th Hawkins's squadron saw a Spanish galleon lying separated from her consorts, and got out their boats and were towed within range of their quarry. The Spaniards had for such an occasion four great galleasses, large sailing vessels with auxiliary oars, and three of them rowed to

the rescue. Then Howard and his squadron were towed into action and by their own account severely punished the galleasses, one of which made off with a pronounced list. Thus when the breeze sprang up the action became general and lasted for five or six hours. The witnesses' accounts are similar to those of the Portland fight, with some detail of individual exploits but nothing to convey a coherent picture of the whole affair. As before, we see Frobisher inshore and heavily engaged with superior numbers, but towed out of peril by a number of small rowing craft. As before also, it seems that Hawkins and Drake were on the seaward side, and again, although no one mentions the tide, it appears that the general drift of the proceedings was north-eastwards towards the St. Helen's point of the Island. It is fairly evident that the first wind was from the east and that it soon veered as on the previous occasion. Corbett's reconstruction is necessarily very inferential, for the facts are utterly inadequate. But he believes that Drake and Hawkins, working round the seaward flank of the Armada, sought to drive it upon the Owers, the mass of shoals lying some ten miles east of the Isle of Wight, and that Medina Sidonia saw the danger in time and took advantage of the wind going into south-west to sail clear and continue up Channel. But his departure was not hurried; we learn that the action ceased at ten in the morning and that it was three in the afternoon before those on the Island lost sight of the fleets. One of the Armada's best galleons had been so badly damaged that she had to leave the fleet and make for the friendly coast of Normandy.

At his council off Plymouth the Spanish leader had agreed to seize an anchorage within the Isle of Wight. Whether he was still seeking to do so is not at all clear,

but the English certainly believed he was and were overjoyed at having driven him to leeward of it. In any case Spithead would not have been a happy spot for the Armada, as perhaps Medina Sidonia realised when it came to the point. Fireships were the terror of a crowded fleet in narrow waters, and here the Spaniards would have been exposed to all the combustibles that Portsmouth and Southampton could supply, launched on a strong tide in calm weather when there could have been no escape.

Calais, approximately one hundred miles from the above scene of action, was the Armada's next point, and the passage thither occupied about fifty-four hours. But the greater part of 26 July was very calm, and then in the evening the first really fresh wind since Plymouth set in from the south-west. During this time, from 10 A.M. on the 25th to 4 P.M. on the 27th, the English did not attack, but followed at a fair distance always keeping the Armada in sight. While drifting in the morning calm of the 26th Howard summoned his chief men on board the *Ark Royal* and there knighted Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Sheffield, John Hawkins, Martin Frobisher and two others. Knighthood was a decoration, not a rank, as is shown by the noblemen receiving it, and it was the only decoration within the power of the Lord Admiral to bestow. The honour to Hawkins and Frobisher thus implied no passing-over of Drake, for there was no way in which Howard could reward him. Frobisher had earned it by conspicuous forwardness in action, and Hawkins, if in no other way, by the wonderful efficiency to which he had brought the Queen's ships. On that point Howard had written to the government more than once, saying that the test of Hawkins's work had shown certain persons to be notable liars.

Medina Sidonia anchored off Calais in the afternoon of 27 July, and by so doing confessed the bankruptcy of Philip's plan. The place was an open roadstead, exposed to the English and the bad weather that now showed signs of setting in. It was miles from the shallow ports in which Parma's unarmed flotilla was closely watched by a flotilla of fighting Dutchmen. And yet there was nowhere else to go, for the Armada's pilots refused to be responsible for leading it along the dangerous coast to leeward. The vision of 'the Cape of Margate' had vanished into thin air, for to go thither would mean for ever getting out of touch with Parma. The unlucky Medina Sidonia could only send word by land to Parma and ask him what he meant to do, to which the answer could only be nothing, and meanwhile concede the initiative to the English.

Howard anchored a mile to windward of the Armada and sent to Dover for fireships. Next day Lord Henry Seymour, who had been lying in the Downs with the main English blockading force, crossed the Straits and joined Howard, leaving the Dutch to keep up the close blockade. His arrival with five of the Queen's good ships and thirty other sail brought Howard up to the maximum strength he could ever attain, and it was determined to seek a decisive battle without delay. For this purpose it was desirable to break up the Armada's military formation. The fireships had not come from England, and so eight auxiliaries of the fleet were sacrificed. About midnight of the 28th, they were sent blazing into the crowded array and produced the required effect. To preserve their close order the Armada's vessels were riding to two anchors each, and there was no time to weigh. The majority did not even slip, but cut their cables and drifted off in the darkness, fouling

one another as they tried to make sail. In the panic one of the great galleasses had her rudder wrenched off by another ship's cable, and in the morning was seen to have gone ashore close to Calais. All the others got away, but the fireships had been well spent,¹ for the military formation could not survive a night rout of this sort, and at daybreak the Armada was scattered for miles along the coast to the eastward. The English were expecting the sight and were prepared to go in and win without delay.

The decisive action of 29 July is called the Battle of Gravelines. Once more the accounts are incoherent on detailed movements, but the general effect is not in doubt. Medina Sidonia, that much abused man, had not lost his head. He had had a patrol of rowing craft out to divert fireships, but it had not been effective. He had given orders to slip and buoy the cables, but in the panic they had not been obeyed. As soon as the fireships had drifted clear he had immediately anchored again, hoping that the others would follow suit, when he purposed to return and recover his moorings as soon as there was light to see them. But the bulk of the Armada's captains, either ill-found or more negligent than their commander, had no spare anchors ready and so continued to drift, and thus he found himself with two or three consorts isolated in face of the oncoming English. He could only weigh and retreat in the hope of reforming the fugitives when he came up with them. Off Gravelines he succeeded in getting about fifteen of the best ships together, and with them faced the English as a screen to the rest.

¹ The fireships represented no half measure. They were large merchantmen of 150 tons and upwards. Their crews sailed them near enough to make sure work and then took to the boats.

The English, with the force under Seymour and Sir William Winter as a fifth squadron, gave their enemy no time. Howard stayed to make sure of the galleass off Calais, while the others attacked at once. As before, it seems that the English groups sailed in lines ahead, but on this occasion came closer and fired with more deadly effect. Medina Sidonia and those with him suffered terrible losses, but were gradually joined by others until fifty Spanish ships were in action. During the eight hours in which this went on the general movement was eastwards, with the water shoaling as the outlying banks of the Flemish coast drew closer. The English sought to drive their enemy upon the banks, the Spaniards to edge out into the North Sea. For reasons which are not clear some of the Spanish captains were deeply dissatisfied with Medina Sidonia's conduct in the later stages and freely hurled insults at him. Howard was also blamed, not at the time but by later critics, for waiting to attack the galleass, but the effect was to convert him and his squadron into a reserve which came into action as the battle developed; and since all is so vague no one can justly say that he was right or wrong. The battle was ended by a hard squall of wind and rain. The English held up to it, but most of the Spaniards, having lost spars and gear, had to run before it with the soundings growing ever shallower. The wind was now north of west and it seemed that nothing could save them, and the English fleet lay off to watch them strike. And then providence, so often trusted, at length functioned, and a shift to south-west enabled the battered Armada to scratch off into the open sea.

Thousands of Spaniards had been killed, two great galleons had run ashore to avoid sinking and had been taken by the Dutch, at least two had gone down in

action. The rest fled northwards never to return to the Flemish coast, the majority never to come to port on any coast at all. And yet the English were not elated. They knew their superiority in guns and weatherliness and seamanship, and had expected something more. With every disadvantage the Armada had made a great fight, and an age ended not unworthily, while another began, as the last of the armies by sea retreated with colours flying before the first of the navies. Drake allowed that good service had been done, but looked for better if only powder could be sent. Hawkins wrote that the English were pursuing, but must have victual and money, powder and shot. Howard sent a modest despatch, claiming little more than that he was plucking their feathers one by one; and he ordered Seymour, much to the latter's disgust, to resume the blockade of Parma's ports. None of them realised that the Armada had fought its last fight; all expected its return when the wind should serve.

Howard pursued until the Armada was past the Firth of Forth on its northward passage. He would willingly have attacked again, but had no powder and confessed that in following at all he was merely bluffing. But the Armada's people were in no case to turn and try him. They had a great many wounded and more sick. Their ships, never in good order, had lost masts and spars and were strained and leaking from battle damages. Their scanty victuals were putrefying and their water was wasting through leaky casks. They had no more powder than the English. They admitted themselves beaten and were thinking only of getting home, not south through the Channel, but north-about by the Pentland Firth, the Hebrides and the west coast of Ireland. The weather, hitherto in their favour, turned

wild, and they had neither charts nor pilots for the northern seas. Many ships sank with all hands, unobserved and unrecorded, which accounts for the uncertainty of the number lost at Gravelines. Many more were wrecked on all the coasts they passed—twelve in Connaught alone, and all the survivors massacred by the Irish. In the end rather less than half of the ships and about one-third of the men who had left Corunna in July struggled home into various Spanish ports, the men so sick that many more died after arrival. Medina Sidonia survived, reviled and insulted by every man in Spain except the King. But Philip knew that his unfortunate admiral was not to blame, and in all his bitter disappointment was generous enough to say so.

In the one-sided fighting the English had lost about a hundred men and not one ship. But afterwards came the reckoning exacted upon filthy food and neglect of hygiene in almost every fleet in those days. Sickness had been rife from the beginning, and as the fleet turned back southwards to the Narrow Seas it grew into a terrible epidemic. Thousands died, some in the ships, some in the ports, where the sufferers were set ashore in such numbers that there were not roofs to cover them and they lay littered about the streets. As soon as it was known that the Armada would not return, a great effort was made to pay off and send the men home. Hawkins toiled manfully at the task, and the Lord Admiral, although summoned to court, was soon back among his men, bent on mitigating the tragedy so far as it was in his power. The Queen and Burghley were at their wits' end to find the money, for the costs of victory had well-nigh broken their finances. In public all was jubilation, with bonfires, processions and triumphant thanksgiving to God. But the mood of all

those who knew what had taken place was of humble thankfulness for escape from a dreadful peril. 'All the world,' wrote Howard, 'never saw such a force as theirs was'; and there was not a man who served under him but confessed that the performance of the Spaniards had exceeded his expectation.

CHAPTER XVII
TOWARDS THE FAR EAST

AFTER writing the *Discourse of Western Planting*, Richard Hakluyt returned in 1584 to his chaplaincy at the Paris embassy, and there continued until the winter of 1588. During those years he achieved an immense amount of work. He procured and assisted the translation or republication of important foreign books on the history of discovery, spending his own small means in financing them. The colonisation of North America was still his prime ambition, and he was assiduous in collecting information upon it and in corresponding with those who could forward it. But Raleigh's Virginian enterprise cooled as rapidly as it had blazed, and Hakluyt's view expanded to new horizons. As we have seen, the English had good reason to believe that the officials in the Portuguese colonies were dissatisfied with Philip II's conquest of their country. The majority submitted to the inevitable and became servants of the new King, but a large minority did not. Hakluyt found in Paris over a hundred officers from the eastern possessions who had thrown in their lot with Don Antonio and were sharing his exile. Through conference with them he realised that the East as well as the West was a potential field for English enterprise. In discussion with Frenchmen also he gained ideas and sometimes listened to unpleasant remarks. As Catholics they twitted him with the fact that Protestants had never

yet done anything for the conversion of the heathen, and in the *Discourse* he had inserted a section urging that the reproach should be removed. Frenchmen also were wont to declare that England had lazily shirked her opportunities and taken little share in the work of discovery. He believed that the charge was unjust. Thus arose in his mind the project of printing a great collection of the narratives of English enterprise, 'the worthy acts of our nation', and of combining with them such information as he could gather of deeds still to be done.

The accumulation of matter amounting to 700,000 words in the space of not more than four years is an astonishing performance when we remember his other employments and the complete lack of so many of the facilities that a modern editor enjoys. Yet substantially it was done in that time, for in little more than twelve months from his final return to England he had seen the vast work through the press and presented it to the world—*The Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation made by Sea or over Land to the most remote and farthest distant Quarters of the Earth at any time within the Compass of these 1500 Years*, a black-letter quarto published in the winter of 1589.¹ American voyages fill one section of it, while two others are devoted to the south-east (including Africa) and the north-east (including besides the White Sea and the Siberian coast the land journeys to Persia and central Asia). The eastern sections were partly inspired by the fact that since Drake's circumnavigation interest was

¹ The text of the 1589 volume is little known to modern students, since all latter-day reprints have been from the three-volume enlarged edition which superseded it ten years later. It should not be forgotten, however, that the 1589 Hakluyt contains some interesting pieces which were omitted from the later edition and now tend to be overlooked.

turning in that direction, and still more they were themselves an inspiration to the intensifying of that interest.

One of the most important voyages newly chronicled in Hakluyt's book was that recently completed by Thomas Cavendish. We have already seen Cavendish in command of a ship in Grenville's first expedition to Virginia. In 1586 he fitted out a squadron for the Straits of Magellan and whatever might lie beyond. It seems improbable that he bore the whole expense, although the narrator of the voyage implies it, and there is some indication that Lord Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain, was one of his patrons. He himself was a Suffolk squire and seems to have had no connection with the Devon adventurers, although his port of final departure was Plymouth. In July 1586 he sailed with three ships of a total of 240 tons and crews of 123 men. Going by way of Sierra Leone and the coast of Brazil he came to Port Desire in Patagonia in the middle of December. Thence he entered the Straits on 6 January 1587, and passed through in forty-nine days. In the passage he fell in with a handful of Spanish survivors of the colony planted by Sarmiento three years earlier. They had abandoned their settlement and were seeking to escape by land to the River Plate. Cavendish took off one of these men. The others continued their journey, and all perished.

Cavendish had better fortune with the weather than had his forerunner Drake, and kept all three of his ships together for the raid of Chile and Peru which he next undertook. On the whole the raid was disappointing. The Spaniards had profited by their experience with Drake so far as to organise a system of couriers by which news was sent on ahead of the English. They had also more armed men on the coast, although apparently they had not yet armed their ships. Thus Cavendish had

some hard fighting and lost about thirty men. He captured a number of ships, but none contained treasure to any great amount. He was obliged to abandon his smallest vessel for lack of hands and passed on to the west coast of Mexico with the two others, the *Desire* and the *Content*. Here he learned from a prisoner that the *Santa Anna* of 700 tons was expected with a rich lading from Manila, and that the southern point of California was the customary landfall for ships coming eastwards across the Pacific. He cruised at this point for three weeks and was rewarded by meeting his quarry. Her people greatly outnumbered his but had no heavy guns, and after six hours' fighting she surrendered. She was laden with silks and other rich China goods, and 122,000 *pesos* of gold, and the narrator makes the almost incredible assertion that the Chinese at that time exchanged gold for silver, weight for weight, in trade with the Spaniards at Manila. In this ship were also found two young Japanese and three native Filipinos, who were all brought to England and thought capable of giving important information. In addition Cavendish became possessed of a large and detailed map of China and much knowledge of its commodities and wealth, although it is not clear that he had these out of the prize.

He transferred as much of the cargo as he could stow and burnt the rest—five hundred tons of valuable stuff and the great ship herself. The narrative by Francis Pretty, one of his officers, is fairly well detailed but throws curiously little light upon the personality of Cavendish. He suffered by being the second and not the first privateer on the West Coast, but it is also evident that he lacked the artist's touch by which Drake made things go easily. More than once he tortured prisoners to gain information which Drake would have elicited by

good-humoured patronage. After a refit he sailed for Asia in the *Desire*. The *Content* was slow in following, and he lost sight of her. There had been some dissatisfaction on board about the distribution of the plunder, and it was thought that she was seeking home independently by the North West Passage. She was never heard of again.

After watering at the Ladrones, Cavendish reached the Philippines in January 1588. He did not venture to attack Manila but gained information of its trade and defences, and was much impressed by reports of the arts and wealth of the Chinese. Passing on without calling at the Moluccas, he sailed through the narrow strait between Bali and Java and followed the south coast of the latter until he reached a haven near the western end, where he stayed to refit. Here he was received as a friend by the Portuguese, who professed allegiance to Don Antonio. They declared that if Antonio would come out (presumably with an English expedition) he would have all the archipelago at his command.

Cavendish made a prosperous voyage across the Indian Ocean and round the Cape of Good Hope. In the Atlantic he was the first Englishman to touch at St. Helena. He found that the Portuguese had established a permanent settlement and that the place was a valuable port of refreshment on the long homeward voyage, a southern counterpart to the Azores. He reached the English Channel at the beginning of September, and ran for Plymouth in one of the westerly gales that were then destroying the wrecks of the Armada. His track must have crossed that of Medina Sidonia, who arrived at Santander three days after Cavendish entered Plymouth.

Although no good account of Drake's circumnavigation had yet been published, there was no secrecy about

the information gained by Cavendish, and Hakluyt printed what was in effect a pilot's guide to the voyage. Latitudes, soundings, courses and distances, the variations of the compass and the prevailing winds were all minutely set down on the authority of Thomas Fuller, the master of the *Desire*; and these details were thus placed at the service of any man who was minded to sail for Asia by the Straits of Magellan. Hakluyt's purpose was never limited to inspiring his countrymen with the romance of adventure. He wished to create a solid body of scientific knowledge. Often, as we may read between the lines, he was hampered by the reticence of those who could have given him what he needed. The frankness of Cavendish and the use Hakluyt made of it are a testimonial to the enlightened spirit of both.

New adventurers were soon forthcoming. In August, 1589, John Chidley left Plymouth with three large ships and two pinnaces. He intended to pass the Straits and execute some enterprise in the gold-bearing country of southern Chile, where the Araucanian Indians maintained a perpetual war of independence against the Spaniards. Only two of the ships reached the Straits. After six weeks battling against westerly gales, in which period they passed Cape Froward eight times and were regularly blown back, they gave up the attempt. Chidley died, and only a small minority survived to see England again. In 1590 John Davis sailed from Dartmouth with a ship and a pinnace, bound for the East Indies. Before passing Madeira his ship was severely damaged in action with a Spaniard, and the resulting leaks compelled him to return to England.

Then Cavendish and Davis joined forces to prepare a great expedition for the South Sea and China. In

August, 1591, they left Plymouth with three large and two small ships, on the understanding that they were to sail together as far as California, when Davis was to part company and search for the North West Passage. The capital appears to have been insufficient, for all the gear was rotten and the sails old, and there was no spare cordage or canvas, the men were half naked, the victuals scanty from the outset, and even the casks were in such decay that water was constantly short. Cavendish himself, although only thirty-one years of age, had obviously deteriorated, and during the voyage some of his actions bespoke an unbalanced mind. He sailed in the *Galleon* and Davis in the *Desire*. The former vessel was perhaps that commanded by Fenton in 1582; her then owner, the Earl of Leicester, had died suddenly in 1588.

Three months out from England the expedition reached the coast of Brazil and captured Santos in the hope of securing food. Not much was obtained, and after several weeks' delay they continued southwards for the Straits. A storm scattered the ships, but they joined again at Port Desire, except one which deserted and turned back. Cavendish had quarrelled with the officers of the *Galleon* and now came on board the *Desire*; and the narrator implies that he had no reason for his hard speeches about his people in the flagship. In April, 1592, they entered the Straits and met with very bad weather. By the middle of May the passage appeared hopeless for that season, as the southern winter was approaching and the weather promised to grow worse. Cavendish then decided to run eastwards by the Cape of Good Hope, as Drake had talked of doing years before. But the case was different, for all equipment was spent and rotten, and the companies

had neither clothes nor food. Davis and other leading men protested that the eastward course was folly, and Cavendish said he would go back to refit at Santos and afterwards attempt the Straits again. He resumed command of the *Galleon*, and all quitted the Straits in company. Soon afterwards the *Galleon* altered course by night without making signals, and in the morning her consorts could see nothing of her. As they were abreast of Port Desire Davis concluded that his commander must have gone into that place to repair some damage received on the night of separation. Davis accordingly made for the harbour in the *Desire*, with a pinnace in company, but Cavendish was not there.

The *Desire* was now falling to pieces and unable to proceed without repairs that would occupy a month. Davis, knowing that Cavendish might have to fight at Santos, was very unwilling to lag behind. He proposed to follow at once in the pinnace with some of the men, leaving the others to repair the ship and await his return. Those who were to remain thought he was deserting them, and plotted to murder him. He discovered their purpose and reasoned mildly with the ring-leaders, but the whole crew were obstinate that the pinnace should not go. Davis was incapable of playing false with any man, and was principally troubled at his unwitting desertion of Cavendish. He had to stay, but he made all hands sign a paper setting forth that the parting company at sea had been unintentional on his part and detailing the defects that made it impossible to navigate the *Desire* any further.

Then they set to work and patched up the ship, seeking at the same time to revictual with seal-flesh, although their salt was insufficient. By the beginning of August they expected the return of Cavendish, but

there was no sign of him. Many men would have given up and gone home, but not Davis. His commander's credit was bound up with the success of the voyage, and he would not let him down. He decided to go for the Straits in case Cavendish should be counting on meeting him there. 'And so,' says John Jane, who was one of them, 'we departed for the Straits the poorest wretches that ever were created'. On the way south they took in the rotten sails whenever it blew hard, in order to preserve them, and thus drifting before a westerly gale, on 14 August 1592 they sighted an unknown lee shore. It was that of the Falkland Islands, now first discovered by men in no case to investigate and looking rather to perish there. But the wind changed in time to save them and blew fair for the Straits, and they passed safely in. After a month of the usual battling with head winds they issued into the South Sea and were immediately blown back, solely for want of sails. All this time the men were dying, the seal-flesh was putrid, and nothing else was to be had but mussels and limpets. They now possessed only one anchor with a broken fluke and one cable spliced in two places. Some voices urged going back, but Davis and the master were firm for going forward; on the West Coast they would find warmth and food, and Cavendish, if he came on, would expect to meet them there.

On 2 October they drove the poor ship again into the South Sea and got clear away from the land. Then the wind blew foul again, and for a week they slowly lost ground. The pinnace was seen to be in distress and disappeared for ever. On the 10th the gale was at its height. They had had no observation for days, but they knew that somewhere in the murk to leeward the iron coast awaited them. The men had ceased work and

were lying apathetic. Davis in the stern gallery, so numb that he could scarcely move, was talking with John Jane, saying that he hoped God would show some sign of favour or else make a quick end. And then 'suddenly the sun shined clear, so that he and the master both observed the true elevation of the Pole, whereby they knew by what course to recover the Straits'. Next day they saw Cape Deseado, the southern point of the entrance, six miles away on the lee bow. Drifting under scanty sail they could not weather it, and there was little hope that with more canvas the rotten outfit would stand up to the wind. Davis ordered the master to make more sail: 'You see there is no remedy, either we must double it or before noon we must die'. The master complied, and soon afterwards the foresail split. The ship like a dead thing sagged away to leeward until she came within the backwash flung off from the cliffs. 'Being thus at the very pinch of death, the wind and seas raging beyond measure, our master veered some of the main sheet; and whether it was by that occasion, or by some current, or by the wonderful power of God, as we verily think it was, the ship quickened her way and shot past that rock.' The extremity of the point was a little farther on and they weathered it by a ship's length, and then striking sail ran under bare poles twenty-six miles into the Straits before finding an anchorage.

With the gales continuing there was no hope of returning to the South Sea. It was stay and starve, or drive through to the Atlantic. While first passing through, Davis had made 'an exquisite plat' of the Straits and had graved every reef and turn upon his memory. At one of the worst parts night overtook them with a howling gale in which they could not risk the

last anchor, and in the darkness he piloted the ship through several crooked reaches narrowing in places to three miles. 'Thus in a mighty fret of weather the seven and twentieth day of October we were free of the Straits, and the thirtieth of October we came to Penguin Isle, being three leagues from Port Desire, the place which we purposed to seek for our relief.' The penguins were to take them home, but it needed two months for the enfeebled crew to kill and barrel a bare supply. During that time the Indians surprised and killed a party of nine men.

In January 1593 they were passing northwards up the Brazilian coast, hoping to seize victuals. But near Santos the Portuguese and Indians attacked them and killed thirteen men. There were now twenty-seven left of the seventy-six who had sailed in the ship from England. They departed with little provision but the penguins and eight leaking casks of water. In the tropics the penguins corrupted and became a mass of maggots, and scurvy in horrible forms broke out. Eleven more died, and of the sixteen remaining Davis and a boy were alone in health, while the master and Jane and one other could do a little work. In that state they came to Berhaven in Ireland on 11 June 1593. Such a man was John Davis the Navigator, inventor of the quadrant and the least advertised of all the great Elizabethan captains. Next year he published a book called *The Seaman's Secrets*, a technical work not dealing with his personal achievements, and in 1595 another, *The World's Hydrographical Description*, with an argument for the continuance of the search for the North West Passage.

Cavendish, who had parted from Davis in May 1592, returned to the Brazilian coast and lost fifty men

in fights with the Portuguese. He was not able to find a peaceable haven in which to refit, and at length turned away to seek St. Helena for the purpose, being determined afterwards to attempt the Straits again. He sighted the island, but was blown away by contrary weather. He then sailed northwards and died before his ship reached England. He held that Davis had deserted him, but it seems evident that the parting was accidental and due to the erratic movements of Cavendish who, moreover, had not appointed a rendezvous for such a contingency.

On 12 June 1593, the day after the *Desire* crept into Berehaven, another expedition sailed from Plymouth for the Straits of Magellan. It was commanded by Richard Hawkins, only son of Sir John, and consisted of a fine galleon named the *Dainty*, a victualler and a pinnace, with crews numbering 164 men. By his own account, printed long afterwards, the voyage was intended 'for the Islands of Japan, of the Philippinas and Moluccas, the Kingdoms of China and the East Indies, by the way of the Straits of Magellan and the South Sea'. Hawkins was not bent primarily upon trade, but upon discovery with a view to subsequent empire-building, and he proposed to pay expenses by raiding the coasts of Chile and Peru on the way. Before he started the failure and death of Cavendish were known, but nothing had been heard of Davis. The Plymouth interest had now taken up the Far Eastern project, and there are hints that some great undertaking was to have been launched so soon as he should return with his report.

Hawkins made the usual passage south by West Africa and Brazil, and in February 1594 sighted the Falkland Islands. Not knowing of Davis's visit, he

believed himself to be their first discoverer and named the coast Hawkins' Maidenland, an echo of Raleigh's Virginia. He did not investigate sufficiently to learn that the discovery was a group of islands, but supposed it to be the Atlantic part of *Terra Australis Incognita*. The faulty work was not due to carelessness on his part, for he was now alone with his large ship, which he could not risk too close to a rocky shore. He had already cast off his victualler, and the pinnace had deserted him shortly before. She was commanded by the man who had deserted Cavendish at the same place two years previously. When the wind came fair for the Straits, Hawkins left his new land and proceeded with the main business of his voyage. He entered on 10 February and took forty-six days to pass through. He has left us the best detailed description of the passage written in his period, with a full account of the hardships, difficulties and reverses incident to what was then the most exacting piece of pilotage in the world. In one respect the contrast with Davis's experience was notable. Although Hawkins had lost many men by scurvy in the tropics he lost none in the Straits, and this was because he had a sound ship and adequate supplies of clothing and gear. For victualling he had to rely on the country because with the large crews of those days it was impossible to carry sufficient for a very long voyage. He collected the usual supplies of penguins and seal-flesh and had provided sufficient salt to preserve them. The necessity for victualling accounts for the continued use of the perilous Straits long after it was guessed that an open sea passage existed to the southward.¹ Hawkins had heard of this passage from

¹ The first to break the tradition and make the Cape Horn passage were the Dutchmen Schouten and Le Maire in 1616. They had the motive of

Drake and remarks that it is probably the best way if a man be provided with fuel and water.

Although the passage of the Straits was hard, Hawkins met with comparatively good weather after emerging and made his way without difficulty up the Chilean coast. He had intended not to show himself by standing in close until he should be north of Callao in Peru, where it might be possible to snatch a good prize and escape northwards to California without being brought to action; for Cavendish's first voyage had revealed that the enterprise was less easy than in Drake's time. However, his crew were undisciplined and clamoured to try their luck at Valparaiso, and against his judgment he yielded. They captured about 10,000 *pesos* of gold in Valparaiso and paid the penalty in the fact that the whole West Coast was thenceforward warned of their approach.

Conditions indeed were far worse than Cavendish had found them, for Spain now had sufficient armed ships to dispose of any English force of the type that had been coming through the Straits. At Panama there was among other craft a large galleon more heavily gunned than the *Dainty*, and at Callao the Viceroy of Peru was able to turn out six ships, of which three carried heavy guns and one was much more than a match for Hawkins's raider. On board his squadron the Viceroy could place two thousand men, while Hawkins at this time had but seventy-five. Another advantage was in sailing. In the Armada fights the Spaniards had been hopelessly outsailed, but on the West Coast they were superior. Between the treasure

interlopers seeking to outflank the rights of the Dutch East India Company, whose monopoly was of all navigation by the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan.

ports and Panama there was never any bad weather, and for most of the distance the wind was constantly from the southward. Every alternate passage was therefore a long beat to windward, and a special fair-weather rig had been evolved for the conditions. Hawkins found that his opponents had larger sail-area and lighter spars than the *Dainty*, and that in any light breeze they could catch him. Such ships would probably not have survived the passage of the Straits, but in their own waters they were very formidable. Hawkins was not long in realising that he had sailed into a tight corner.

The six vessels sent out from Callao were commanded by Don Beltran de Castro. He went southwards to seek Hawkins and found him off Cañete in the middle of May 1594. Hawkins, with his Armada experience of Spanish sailing qualities, stood out to sea close hauled in the hope of shaking off his pursuers. He found that they overhauled him rapidly and got to windward at the same time. But luck was with him, for the wind freshened to a degree unusual on that coast. Don Beltran carried too much sail in his eagerness to close, and lost his mainmast. The second-best ship split her mainsail, and the third broke her main yard. The smaller ships did not venture to tackle the *Dainty* by themselves. Thus at nightfall Hawkins altered course and by daylight was out of sight of his enemies. It had been a narrow escape, and Hawkins determined to push on into the unknown north as speedily as possible. He had first to water and fuel and refit, and for that purpose chose the Bay of Atacames, one degree north of the equator. He guessed that his pursuers would be out again when they had repaired damages, and was in great haste to be gone. But his unruly crew thought more of plunder than of peril and compelled him to waste time chasing ships which he

could not overtake. Beltran de Castro went back to Callao and reorganised his force. He sailed again with 1300 men in a pinnace and two ships, one of which was equal in size and guns to the *Dainty* and the other much more powerful. Hawkins says that she was equal to the Queen's *Victory*, which his father commanded against the Armada.¹

On the morning of 18 June this Spanish squadron entered the Bay of Atacames just as Hawkins was weighing anchor to depart for good from the Peruvian coast. The repeated insubordination of his mariners had wasted the few hours needed for escape, but they fought most valiantly in the battle that followed. For three days the *Dainty* held out against battering and boarding until nearly sixty of her seventy-five men were killed or wounded. The survivors surrendered when the ship was on the point of sinking and Hawkins was lying helpless with six wounds. He was against surrender, and his fiery words, 'Came we into the South Sea to put out flags of truce?' postponed it for a whole day after it had been first proposed. But in the end, thinking himself dying, he agreed that the decision should be 'for them which should be partakers of life'. He lacked the power of leadership which had made his father great, but no more honourable man fought in these wars. Don Beltran, no less a man of honour, admired Hawkins and treated him well. He had promised liberty as well as life and did his utmost to see the terms carried out. The men were released and sent to England after a year or two, but in Hawkins's own case the Spanish government overruled the capitulation and kept him a prisoner until 1602, fearing to set free a man with his knowledge of

¹ See *The Observations of Sir Richard Hawkins*, with some additional documents, Argonaut Press edition, 1933.

the Straits and the South Sea. His was the last English expedition through the Straits in this period.

So far this chapter has dealt with attempts on the East from Suffolk and Devon; but London was also engaged, and the Londoners favoured the Portuguese route by the Cape of Good Hope. The Turkey Company, which in 1592 became the Levant Company, had been chartered for Asiatic trade through the Mediterranean, and it was in all probability from members of this body acting outside its organisation that the new London enterprise proceeded.¹ In 1589 the persons interested petitioned for a commission to trade by way of the Cape of Good Hope, naming three Turkey ships that they proposed to use. Nothing came of it until 1591, when two of those ships were among the three sent out on an eastern voyage.

At the head of the expedition was George Raymond in the *Penelope*, and with him were Samuel Foxcroft and James Lancaster, commanding respectively the *Merchant Royal* and the *Edward Bonaventure*. The ultimate object in view seems to have been very similar to that of Cavendish and Richard Hawkins, that is, a reconnaissance of the conditions in the Eastern Archipelago; and just as those adventurers had sought to pay their way by attacking the Spaniards in Peru, so the London expedition intended to meet expenses by plundering Portuguese shipping in the East. There is however a deep difference in the policies pursued. Cavendish had been friendly with the Portuguese in Java, and we know that Drake, who was generally

¹ The names of the originators are not on record, but the ships they proposed to use belonged to the Levant trade. At a later stage members of the Levant Company are positively identifiable as engaged in the East Indian enterprise. See Sir W. Foster's *England's Quest of Eastern Trade*, pp. 127-8, 146.

associated with the ventures of the Hawkins family, set a high value on the alliance with Don Antonio. This party believed that eastern trade would most easily be opened by assisting the Portuguese colonists to revolt against Philip II. The Londoners on the other hand proposed to attack and supplant the Portuguese. Ultimately that became the policy of the East India Company in its early years. But it is just possible that if Richard Hawkins had completed his voyage and returned successful, a Devon corporation for eastern trade would have followed a different plan.

The ships sailed in April 1591, and their crews had suffered severely from disease when they reached the Cape in July. In Table Bay the expedition was reorganised. Foxcroft had died, and his ship was sent home with the sick and as few fit men as could sail her. The rest of her crew were used to strengthen the other two ships, which went on into the Indian Ocean. Hardly had they reached it when Raymond's *Penelope* went down with all hands in a great gale. Lancaster continued the voyage up the East African coast and did not leave Zanzibar until February, 1592. His was the first English vessel in this part of the Indian Ocean, and faulty knowledge of the winds caused him to make a very slow passage across to Sumatra, which he reached in June. Lancaster cruised for nearly five months in the Straits of Malacca and adjacent waters, capturing spices from several Portuguese vessels, and losing men by sickness all the time. He then moved westwards to seek prizes on the coast of Ceylon, but the survivors of his crew insisted on sailing for England. The homeward voyage was a continuous tragedy of the same sort as that of John Davis. As the crew became weaker the progress of the ship became slower, and the ravages of

famine and scurvy grew ever more dreadful. At St. Helena, reached in April 1593, they found some relief, but the slow passage of the equatorial belt of calms brought conditions to their worst. Seeing no hope of holding out to reach England direct, Lancaster ran with the trade wind to the West Indies. He hovered round various islands for three months, never getting an adequate supply of victuals, and when attempting to make north for Newfoundland the ship was crippled in bad weather and forced to return. In November the *Edward* and her captain parted company at Mona, between Porto Rico and Hispaniola. Lancaster and some of the crew had gone ashore for provisions, when the ship drifted away with only six on board. They and the ship fell into Spanish hands.¹ Lancaster was taken off the island by a French privateer and ultimately reached home in May 1594.

It had been a terrible voyage from which eighty per cent of those who embarked never returned, and in which all the invested capital was lost. The crucial problem of long passages, and of the East Indian voyage especially, was supply. How could a ship be victualled for a protracted period and still have room for merchandise? The Portuguese partly met it by employing huge carracks of 1200 tons, which seem to have been more economical in man-power than the same tonnage would have been if spread over several vessels. Portuguese and Spaniards also could live on less than Englishmen; it was a standing jest with them that English mariners were extravagant eaters. But even so the Portuguese suffered heavy casualties on their eastern voyages, and the riches they brought home

¹ A disputed point cleared up by Sir W. Foster, whose account of the voyage is here followed.

in the course of the sixteenth century were gained at the cost of permanently debilitating the little nation, whose numbers at the outset were less than a million. The Dutch in the following century solved the problem of the ocean voyage by making such far-reaching improvements in ships and gear that the size of their crews could be heavily reduced, while at the same time their increasing knowledge of the ocean winds enabled the duration of passages to be shortened considerably. In this advance the English followed them. It has been going on ever since. The essential clue to the history of merchant shipping in modern times has been the reduction of crews and the shortening of voyages, from the past when it took a hundred men and three years to work a 300-ton ship to the East Indies and back, to the present when the same number of men work a 10,000-ton ship the same distance in a few weeks. The advent of steam has but accelerated a process that went very far in the days of sail.

The next expedition was even more tragic than Lancaster's. It was financed chiefly by Sir Robert Dudley, brother-in-law of Cavendish, and was placed under the command of Benjamin Wood. With three ships and a letter from the Queen to the Emperor of China, Wood sailed in the autumn of 1596. He intended to proceed by the Straits of Magellan, which he had already visited with Chidley's expedition of 1589. Whether he actually attempted the Straits is unknown, but it is evident that he entered the Indian Ocean by the Cape, for in July 1597 he was off Mozambique.¹ Having lost one of his ships, Wood cruised eastwards

¹ There is no English narrative of the voyage, of which the story has been put together from Dutch and Portuguese notices. The version here followed is that adopted by Sir W. Foster, pp. 138-41.

by way of the Malabar coast and Ceylon, and reached the Straits of Malacca in January 1598. He had captured some Portuguese shipping, but sickness compelled him to abandon one of his two remaining vessels. With the last of his squadron, the *Bear*, he went northwards to Burma and was wrecked near Martaban. Wood and most of his men are heard of no more, but seven survivors in a small native boat crossed the Indian Ocean westwards until they came to Mauritius. Two lost their lives in a quarrel, and four put to sea again and were probably lost. The last survivor, a Frenchman, stayed on Mauritius until he was rescued by a Dutch ship in 1601. The older version of the story, that four men of this expedition ultimately reached the Spanish West Indies, can hardly be true, and probably proceeds from some confusion with Lancaster's adventures, unless indeed the four who disappeared from Mauritius by some incredible means reached so far.

Mention of the Dutch introduces the fact that after the defeat of the Armada they rapidly became an oceanic power. In the 1590's not only were they sending contingents to English naval expeditions and making privateering voyages to the Spanish Main and the West Indies, but they devoted themselves especially to the Eastern enterprise. They were greatly urged thereto by the publication of a famous book, or rather two books, by Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, who had travelled to eastern waters with the Portuguese and returned after several years to expose the mercantile secrets and military weakness of his hosts. In consequence the Dutch determined to oust the Portuguese from the Archipelago. In 1595-97 Cornelius Houtman led a successful expedition to Java and returned with at least a promise of a rich trade, and before the close of the

century fifty Dutch ships had sailed for the East with a faith and persistence which reaped their reward.

Linschoten's writings had an international importance, being translated into English and published in London in 1598, together with an account of Houtman's voyage. Other circumstances maintained the London interest, dreadful though the English experience had been. Drake's capture of the great carrack in 1587 had been followed by an even greater prize in 1592, when the *Madre de Dios* of 1600 tons was taken at the Azores by a crowd of English privateers. By contemporary rates of money value she was probably the richest ship ever brought into an English port, and her papers confirmed and supplemented the revelations of Linschoten. Several such vessels came home yearly, and the profits drawn by Philip II from this source alone must have exceeded the whole annual revenue of Elizabeth. From all sides information was accumulating. Lancaster was available as a man who had made the voyage. So also was John Davis, who had made a trip with the Dutch and was back in London early in 1600 with the latest news of the eastern situation. In 1599 Hakluyt, who had inspired the translation of Linschoten, began the issue of an enlarged three-volume edition of the *Principal Navigations*, its bulk more than double that of the first edition, and containing a great amount of new matter on the East. At this time Hakluyt was as prominent in the rôle of expert geographer in the counsels of the East Indian projectors as he had been fifteen years before in those of the Virginia colonisers.

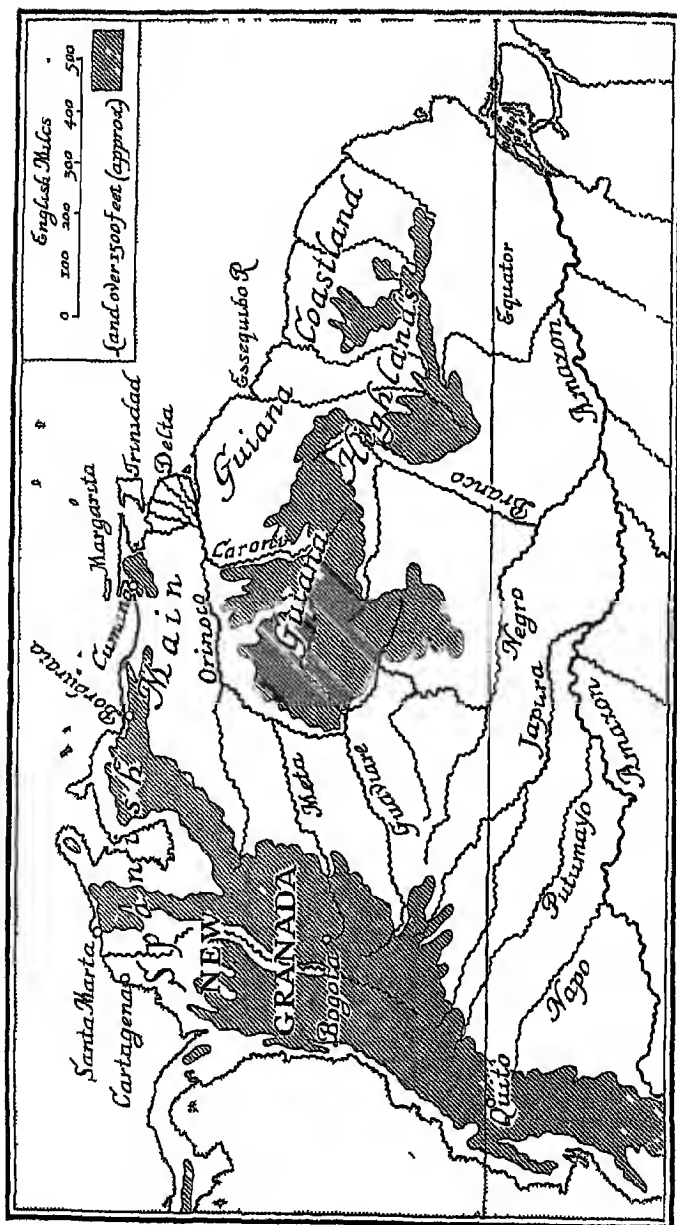
In 1599 a strong body of London merchants, about half of them members of the Levant Company, petitioned for a charter for the oceanic approach to the East. It was refused on account of peace negotiations then in

prospect. But the refusal was provisional. The Queen was alive to the importance of the matter, but did not wish to commit herself in definite terms from which she might have to withdraw in a subsequent treaty. In 1600 the parley with Spain broke down, and the charter was approved. It was issued on the last day of the year and of the century, and in the following spring the East India Company sent forth its first expedition, with James Lancaster in command and John Davis as his chief navigating officer.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EMPIRE OF GUIANA

SINCE the failure of John Hawkins's attempt to establish trade with the Atlantic coast of Spanish South America that region had been chiefly interesting as a cruising-ground for privateers; and so the true Spanish Main, the colonised coast from the peninsula of Cumana westward to the Isthmus of Panama, continued to be until the close of our period. In the interior, south-westwards from the centre of the Main, lay the uplands and mountains of New Granada; and south of them again Peru, regions of long-established Spanish settlement and governance. South-east of the same centre lay the basin of the Orinoco, traversed by a few exploring expeditions, but not, even at the end of the sixteenth century, under effective Spanish rule. The Orinoco runs roughly west to east in its middle and lower course, after it has grown great by receiving numerous tributaries from the high land of New Granada. On its left or northern bank lay the open Venezuelan plains. On its southern bank the country rose into a mass of high ground, the mountains of Guiana, unpenetrated by Europeans and the source of marvellous tales related by the Indians of the river. Tributaries joined the Orinoco from the mountains, but they were unnavigable by reason of cataracts. North-eastwards the mountains discharged a whole series of rivers to the Atlantic. One and all tumbled over the



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escarpment in falls and rapids and then flowed deep and practicable for comparatively short courses through the wet forest plains to the sea. The forested plains formed the coastal strip of Guiana, an utterly different country from the Guiana mountain-mass. The southward boundary of both was marked by the basin and delta of another mighty river, the Amazon, traversed by Spanish pioneers, but occupied neither by Spaniards nor by the Portuguese, whose Brazilian settlements lay far away to the east.

The Guiana coastlands had attractions for traders and planters, and were easily penetrable through the river estuaries. But their time had not yet come, for as long as the wars endured true colonisation had to wait upon raiding and privateering. The unknown Guiana mountain-mass had a possibility of a different kind, alluring to Spaniards and Englishmen who thought in terms of treasure and war. For in those mountains some believed that a rich and civilised Indian empire existed, the country of El Dorado, the gilded king, with a capital city of Manoa of vast size and magnificent building.

The story of El Dorado the man seems to have had a true origin in a religious rite observed among a civilised people of the past, but people and rite had perished in native wars half a century before the advent of the Spanish conquerors. The story of the golden civilised empire, to which the name Eldorado was commonly applied, grew out of the Spanish conquest itself. When Pizarro overran the Andean civilisation of the Incas in Peru, some of its people fled eastwards down the mountain slopes into the unknown forest plains below. It was supposed—and there was evidence capable of being interpreted to that effect—that the

refugees had re-established their civilisation or reinforced an existing branch of it, and that the parent goldfield of South America was the scene of their continued existence. For Peru when conquered had been full of golden objects, and yet there was little gold to be mined within its limits. Chile indeed produced gold, but it did not seem an adequate explanation of the pristine riches of Peru. The great source, it was thought, must be yet undiscovered. So all things together—the Indian folk-memories, the signs seen by explorers, the half-understood information from trembling natives anxious to placate their brutal visitors, and the reasoning that what had been in Peru might still be in the unknown—had combined for fifty years to tempt Spanish adventurers to the quest of Eldorado. They had looked for it on the upper Amazon, whose streams flow from the slopes of the Andes. They had searched farther north in the country traversed by the Napo, the Putumayo and the Papamene, which join the Amazon lower down, a difficult country held by the fighting Omaguas of the Carib race, a virile people with symptoms of a semi-civilised organisation. And lastly the Spaniards of New Granada had descended the Orinoco or its western feeders, and those of the Main had ascended it. To the southward they had seen the Guiana mountains and had failed to penetrate them. There, it seemed, must be Eldorado.

The man who cast the Guiana version of Eldorado into its final and most persuasive form was Antonio de Berrio, an old soldier of Charles V and the early wars of Philip II, who was sixty years of age when he first went out to South America in 1580 to take up property left to his wife in New Granada. Berrio made arduous explorations in search of Eldorado. In 1584–85 he

travelled from New Granada eastwards to the Orinoco, beheld the mountains beyond that river, heard of a civilised people with much gold, and was obliged by the debility of his men to return. In 1585-88 he made a second journey, and after a more protracted attempt again failed to penetrate the mountains and returned to New Granada. He now concluded that the best line of entry would be by the lower reaches of the Orinoco, with a base on the island of Trinidad at its mouth. He had put his case to Philip II, who appointed him Governor of Eldorado. In 1590-91 he made a third attempt, setting out from New Granada and building boats to descend the tributaries to the Orinoco. He went slowly down the great river, exploring its banks and failing to find a passage into the eastern mountains. All he heard from the natives convinced him that the rich empire was there. The river Caroni, joining the Orinoco from the mountains, was barred by a high waterfall, but here he thought was the true way in. Loss of men compelled him to pass it by and continue down to the Atlantic, to Trinidad and thence to Margarita. He had transferred his base from New Granada and the upper Orinoco to Trinidad and the delta.

The Spaniards of the coast were jealous and hostile and hampered his efforts to raise a new force. All he could do was to found a little settlement at San Josef in Trinidad in 1592 and to send his lieutenant Domingo de Vera up to the Caroni in the next year. De Vera collected new information, which placed Eldorado and its capital Manoa far to the south-eastward in the highlands beyond the source of the Caroni. There stood Manoa on the Lake of Parima, overshadowed by the heights of the Sierra Parima. Meanwhile the enmity and trickery on the coast continued, and in 1594 Berrio

sent de Vera to Spain to raise an expedition there. De Vera was successful in Spain, but before his return the English had come on the scene.¹

Sir Walter Raleigh had heard of Eldorado years before and had read in Spanish histories of the early attempts to find it. It is evident that he also knew something of Berrio's work in fixing the lower Orinoco as the best path to the goal. He does not tell us how he gained his information. In 1592 Raleigh fell heavily from his high position as chief loverlike flatterer to the Queen. He was discovered to have secretly married Elizabeth Throgmorton, and Elizabeth Tudor made her displeasure known. Raleigh was removed from the palace to the Tower, and released only because he was the chief employer of the privateer crews who had captured the *Madre de Dios*. These loose mariners had plundered the prize of her best treasures, and Raleigh was sent down to Devon to endeavour to save something for the Queen. After that he was at liberty but not in favour, still Captain of the Guard, but performing the duties by deputy and forbidden to show his face at court. He was not a man who could rest idle, and he took up the Guiana project as a means to restoring his credit. He obtained the Queen's sanction and subscriptions from some investors, including the Lord Admiral and Sir Robert Cecil, and sailed from Plymouth on 6 February 1595. He had already in the previous year sent out a small vessel under Jacob Whiddon to reconnoitre the Spanish settlement and the anchorages at Trinidad.

¹ The above represents a very condensed summary of the account given in Dr. V. T. Harlow's Introduction to his edition of Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana*, Argonaut Press, 1928. By the use of Spanish documents hitherto unknown Dr. Harlow completely revises the older accounts of Berrio's and Raleigh's proceedings. For a full understanding of the subject, here treated in bare outline, it is necessary to consult his work.

In 1595 there were two other English expeditions in these waters. Sir Robert Dudley appeared at Trinidad early in the year, sent a boat party into the Orinoco, and gathered some information upon Eldorado. Then he went on through the Caribbean on a privateering venture. Captains Amyas Preston and George Somers sailed about the same time as Raleigh, and he hoped that they would join forces with him for Guiana. But they seem to have purposely steered clear of him and carried out a daring raid along the Main, among other exploits capturing the inland city of St. Iago de Leon in the Caracas. Raleigh therefore had at Trinidad his own and the Lord Admiral's force, consisting of two large and two small ships. He reached the island on 22 March and soon afterwards captured the little settlement at San Josef, whose Spaniards were killed or dispersed, while Antonio de Berrio became Raleigh's prisoner. Raleigh, like Berrio, thought Trinidad an excellent base for operations in the continent, and, unlike Berrio, he took trouble to conciliate the natives. Where Berrio had used the common Spanish methods of terrorism, with frequent torturings and executions, Raleigh was at pains to impress the Indians with the mildness and benevolence of the English and the greatness of their Queen, whose arm was strong to protect all men from the Spanish tyrant. Now and afterwards Raleigh was convinced that success against Spain in the Indies depended on alliance with Spain's oppressed subjects. Nor was it all self-interest; Raleigh had a genuine liking for the Guiana Indians and has left some admiring pen-portraits of his friends.

Berrio had suffered very hard luck. He was now seventy-five years old, and was eagerly awaiting the return of Domingo de Vera from Spain with forces adequate to the conquest of Eldorado. It was essential to

gain time by staving off an English advance into the country. He therefore adopted an attitude of frankness with Raleigh, telling him at large of the difficulties of any advance into the mountains, and revealing that the city of Manoa had now been located well beyond the headwaters of the Caroni and not, as had been thought, comparatively close to the Orinoco. Raleigh also knew of the expected coming of de Vera from Spain and of another force summoned by Berrio from New Granada. No doubt Raleigh partly discounted Berrio's discouraging talk, for its motive must have been obvious, but he was sufficiently impressed to be shaken in his intention of pressing on to the golden city. He organised a boat party of a hundred men and led them up the river, but he was all the time worried over the possible fate of his ships, left weakly manned at the entrance. Raleigh knew all the lessons that history could teach, and it was not for want of having read Cortes that he thus left half his force behind him. The truth was that only half his heart was in the task; the other half was at court, and the ships were a link which a more resolute man would have disregarded.

With his boats he made the difficult passage over the bars into the delta, found an Indian guide to lead him up the right channel, and rowed upstream to the confluence of the Caroni. Everywhere he charmed the Indians and laid the foundation of an English protectorate which they would have been eager enough to welcome. On all hands he heard convincing stories of Manoa and its great emperor, and of its warlike people with whom these outer borderers were at enmity—the Mexican situation of Cortes over again. The ultimate plan took shape of advancing on Manoa with the aid of the river folk and then of becoming the friend and pro-

tector of all against Spain. He had no shadow of doubt of the existence of Eldorado and of its position some two hundred and fifty miles south-east of the Caroni's mouth. It is sufficiently evident that there was a strong people seated there, and that parts of the country were to a small degree auriferous, but also that the reality fell far short of the vision of a great civilised state with gold as common as clay.

When he reached the Caroni, the rivers were flooding and boating was becoming difficult. Some miles up the tributary were the great cataracts to be seen from afar. The boats could not ascend the cataracts, there were no horses, and Raleigh hated marching. In any short and sharp affair with sword in hand he was as brave as the best, but he lacked endurance. It was natural enough, as he himself hints, after spending the best years of his life at court without missing a meal or a night in bed. He is eloquent on the uncleanness of men crowded in boats in the steaming air and the unsavouriness of food eaten in such conditions. But he had been up river barely a month, and there had been no fighting, no fever, no starvation. The expedition had been a picnic in comparison with old Berrio's journeys. The rainy season, however, was setting in, and prudence commanded return—there was the danger that the ships might be lost or that the river party might be entrapped by the arrival of the force from Spain. No doubt it would have been the height of rashness to sever communications and plunge into the rough unknown country ahead. But one thinks of the great Spanish leaders who had shown their prudence in the prudent conduct of fantastically rash undertakings, and one thinks of Drake in Panama and Davis in the Straits. Raleigh was not of their sort.

He went back in quick time on the flooded stream. At the Caroni he had taken samples of rocks that promised gold, and at one point on the return journey Captain Lawrence Keymis landed on the bank and was taken across country by a chief and shown a gold mine, or what he took for one. At the time, with all the gold of Eldorado in the air, no special importance was attached to it, but afterwards this became one of the mines so important in the tragedy of 1618.

Raleigh recovered his ships and passed on westwards along the Main. At Cumana he generously released Berrio—a meaner man would have carried his rival to England. The old hero pulled his scattered people together, got back to Trinidad, and later in that same year 1595 went up the river and founded the post of San Thome close to the Caroni confluence. There he sat down at the gate of Eldorado to await the men from Spain. Next year de Vera brought not merely an army but a colony of 1500 men, women and children, for Philip II had been greatly troubled at the prospect of an English conquest in South America. Berrio was now too feeble to lead the advance on Manoa. He sent 300 men under another officer, who died by the way. Then the force became a mob, which committed atrocities on the Indians and got itself massacred by them. Only a handful straggled back to San Thome, and soon afterwards Berrio died there. His son Fernando de Berrio succeeded to the enterprise, but he was a sluggish man who allowed it to fall into abeyance.

In September 1595 Raleigh came home, seven months after he had sailed from Plymouth. He was not well received, for, generous and humane though he was, his old success at court had made him intensely unpopular with his competitors, and they were determined

not to see him re-establish himself. They decried the value of his orcs, and even said that he had not been to Guiana but had lurked in Cornwall until his ships returned. He answered in a famous book, *The Discovery of the Large Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana*, in which he described in his own vivid prose the things that he had seen and heard. He placed the enterprise on the high plane of statesmanship. It was not, he said, for private men to go grabbing gold and spreading ruin and disaster. Guiana was a business for the Queen and the nation. In its mountain fastness with its approach so easily defensible an English dominion might be firmly rooted, a permanent check to Spanish power and a source of the wealth which the nationhood of England needed to make good its liberty. He was very willing to go out as the Queen's deputy at the head of a national force. He and Richard Hakluyt had unavailingly preached the same doctrine for Virginia, and here again it did not avail. The Queen, who had never forgiven him, was unimpressed. The great men for the most part regarded the scheme as his personal manoeuvre for position, although Robert Cecil, who was not his friend and not a great-minded man, was curiously attracted to Guiana and remained so until his death. The others simply cried the thing down.

In the hope that times would change for the better Raleigh kept the connection alive. Although in his book he had insisted that the Orinoco provided the only way into upland Guiana, reflection showed him that there were other possibilities. In January 1596 he despatched Lawrence Keymis with a ship and a pinnace to make a survey of the hitherto neglected Guiana coast. Keymis made first for the mouth of the Amazon and then passed westwards along the coast, compiling a list

of the great rivers and the peoples dwelling on them as far as the delta of the Orinoco. This was well worth doing, for any of these rivers might conceivably furnish as good an approach to Eldorado as the Caroni. The pinnace entered some of the rivers, including the Corentine, whose headwaters and also those of the Essequibo were ascertained to lie very near to the desired position. All these rivers, falling from the mountain region to the coastal plain, were barred by rapids, but so also was the Caroni. Keymis finished by entering the Orinoco, where his progress was blocked by the new San Thome. He was thus prevented from investigating further the gold deposits noticed by Raleigh near the mouth of the Caroni. No sooner had Keymis returned than Raleigh sent out Captain Leonard Berry with a pinnace to make a more thorough examination of certain rivers. Berry penetrated three promising rivers as far as their rapids and brought news that the Spaniards were engaged on the same discovery.

Traders, English and Dutch, were soon engaged in barter with the Indians of the estuaries for tobacco, cotton and dyestuffs, but with Berry's voyage, so far as we know, the probing for Eldorado ceased for many years. In the reign of James I English enterprise in Guiana became colonial—planting and trading in the river mouths—while Raleigh in the Tower tempted the King to release him, not with tales of Eldorado, but with promise of shiploads of gold from the mines along the banks of the Orinoco.

CHAPTER XIX

DECLINE AND TRANSITION

TOUT *lasse, tout casse, tout passe*. The peculiar energy of the English spirit evoked by the conditions described in this book died down, as all manifestations of life must do, to be succeeded by other forms more suited to a changed environment. The decline becomes evident soon after the defeat of the Armada, and that event marked also a decisive change in the conditions wherein the English people shaped its life. Before, all had been uncertain, a foreign conquest thought possible, an overthrow of Protestantism and the free English state. After, there was little uncertainty on the main issue of liberty attacked, the power of England to determine her own development was established, and the question shifted to the use she should make of the position she had won. There was a pause before the question was reduced to terms, much less answered. The older generation could not compass it; and as they died out, they were not followed by new men of their own type, for the conditions that had bred them were passing away. So the last decade of the sixteenth century is less brilliant than its predecessors; the old fires were cooling, the new not yet aflame from their ashes.

In rapid succession the leaders pass from the scene: Leicester in 1588, Walsingham in '90, Grenville in '91, Frobisher in '94, Hawkins in '95, Drake in '96,

Burghley in '98. When the old Queen who had commanded them all breathed her last in 1603 there remained Raleigh, his active career soon to be extinguished, the Lord Admiral, fast weakening as old age drew on, and Sir Robert Cecil, the sole efficient link between old policies and new. The men who were really to mould the coming time were as yet little known, and their work was not destined to be such as to shed on them the brilliant light that illumines Drake and his contemporaries. The founders of the English power in the East and the colonial empire in the West are known to students of history, but their names are not household words.

In the winter of 1588-89, when the full destruction wrought upon the Armada was realised, it became a question how best to exploit the success. There were two plans in the field, sponsored by Drake and Hawkins respectively, and the Queen at heart favoured neither, but would have preferred to avoid risk by a passive defence. Drake had always believed in Don Antonio as an instrument to victory. He accepted the refugee's assertion that Portugal was ripe for revolt against Spain, and held that an English landing with the Don in company would be the signal for a promising rebellion. To strike one's enemy by aiding his rebels was prominent in the technique of these wars. The English had done it for years in the Netherlands. Spain had sought to foment Catholic risings in England; she had sought also to co-operate with Irish rebels and was to do so again; and she had instigated the Catholic League to civil war in France, and was shortly to send it military aid. It was a move capable of yielding good results for small expenditure, always provided that there were any rebels to make use of. On that head optimism was apt

to mislead. Catholics in England had been slow to turn out at the call of Spain. In Portugal the dissidents were an unknown quantity, and it was one of the defects of the plan of 1589 that no real estimate was obtained of their capabilities. The idea that Portugal could be a second Netherlands involved some confusion of thought, since to use a rebellion already in progress was one thing and to initiate it was another.

The Queen had doubts but yielded to Drake, and then made a risky plan nearly hopeless by requiring him to fulfil divergent purposes in addition to the direct undertaking. He was to go first to the ports of North Spain and destroy the Armada ships which had returned there, then to do the same at Lisbon and in the process investigate Don Antonio's prospects. If they were favourable he was to be seated on the throne; if not, the expedition was to go to the Azores and occupy some of the islands. The latter alternative was reasonable, but the prior attempt on northern Spain was not, for it would weaken the force for the main business and deprive it of the advantage of surprise. That leads to the point: what was the main business? In Drake's mind it was Portugal, in Elizabeth's the Armada shipping; and the discrepancy proved fatal.

The crippling expense of fighting the Armada had made it impossible for the Queen to turn out a great force in 1589 unless dire peril should demand it. The undertaking was therefore financed by a joint-stock syndicate, the Queen, Drake and other prominent persons being contributors. The operations were to be military as well as naval, and Sir John Norreys, a soldier famous in the Netherland and Irish wars, was associated with Drake in the command. The fleet comprised six important ships of the Navy, with the *Revenge* as flag-

ship, and over a hundred private warships and merchantmen. The numbers of men may have been 4000 seamen and 17,000 soldiers, but such was the confusion in which they assembled and embarked that not even the commanders knew how many there were, and exact statement is now impossible. Only a tiny fraction of the troops were trained men from the Netherlands, the rest being armed civilians with no cohesion or discipline. The victuals were sufficient for about one month.

The commanders sailed from Plymouth on 18 April. They found the winds unfavourable for approaching Santander, where there were forty ships of the Armada, and made their first point Corunna, where there was only one. They thus incurred the Queen's displeasure for not destroying the shipping, and at the same time gave warning for the Spaniards to organise the defence of Lisbon; for the stay at Corunna lasted sixteen days and the further intention was well known. At Corunna the English landed and stormed the lower town, but failed to take the upper town into which the garrison retired. They captured a quantity of victuals, much of which was wasted, and of wine, which they would have been better without; for the eyewitnesses relate that the orgy of drunkenness began the demoralisation that was thenceforth progressive. Not for the first time did 'the hot Spanish wines' wreak more injury than the enemy's shot upon a Tudor army.

On 9 May they re-embarked and sailed southwards, and on the 16th the army was again landed at Peniche, outside the Tagus estuary and fifty miles by land from Lisbon. It is said, on rather hazy authority, that Drake opposed the landing at this place and urged that it should be at Cascaes near the mouth of the Tagus, but that the soldiers overruled him. However, there was

Don Antonio at last on his own soil with the English behind him, and he carried Norreys forward with his confident assertions that the country would flock to join. Scarcely a man did so, and the army, if it can be so called, weak with excess of liquor and lack of food, took seven days to walk the fifty miles to Lisbon, unopposed by the Spaniards while doing so. It had been arranged that Drake should lead the fleet up the Tagus to the city. He found the wind at first foul to enter, and when it came fair he was deterred by having no news of Norreys. If the army should be in retreat it would need him at Cascaes, and he might then be unable to get out. It was unlike Drake, but those were his reasons, and until too late he remained outside assaulting the castle of Cascaes. Meanwhile Norreys had come to a halt at the gates of Lisbon. The Spaniards had concentrated their forces behind the walls and were prepared for a resolute stand. Norreys had no guns, for they and all resources for a siege were in the ships. He had never bargained for an attack on Lisbon without the fleet, nor without the enthusiastic co-operation of the Portuguese people. Neither was forthcoming, and he could only retreat. He had lost many men from sheer debility, and with many more sick he came down to Cascaes and took ship at the end of May.

Six weeks out from England was the usual time in which these terrible expeditions began to break up, and this one was worse supplied and worse ordered than usual. Drake intended to sail for the Azores with the remnant, but contrary winds caused the scanty remaining time to run out. He turned north and entered Vigo with only 2000 of the troops fit for service. Then, seeing that the game was up, he made for England and reached Plymouth at the end of June. Many of the captains had

not awaited his decision. The return was even more disorganised than the departure, and the losses were never exactly known. But they were very heavy; Raleigh estimated them at 8000 men. So ended the counterstroke to the Armada. Whether justly or not, Drake received the chief blame, and for the next five years the Queen allowed him no important command.¹

Hawkins had watched all this with a disapproving eye. He was the best administrator in the English service, and with his orderly habit of mind could expect no good from the employment of the undisciplined rabble who then passed for soldiers. We have already seen him before the Armada campaign deprecating land operations in foreign countries, from which he looked for nothing but expense. There is ground for inferring that Burghley and the Lord Admiral agreed with him and that Walsingham had supported Drake. Hawkins had now got the regular Navy into such order that he believed it possible for squadrons to keep the sea for four months and more without disintegrating, in winter or summer alike. But the squadrons he had in mind were to be of the Queen's ships, equipped by her dockyards and commanded by her officers, not irregular assemblies of privateers and armed merchantmen with only a stiffening from the Navy. Drake had shown in 1587 that these could do brilliant work, and in 1589 that they had grave weaknesses, but whether successful or not their endurance had been short. The same thing had been seen in 1588, when Howard reported during the preliminary cruises in search of the Armada that it was ever the irregulars who could not stand up to the

¹ The leading historians of the Portugal expedition are Sir J. S. Corbett in *Drake*, ii, chap. ix, and Mr. M. Oppenheim in *Monson's Tracts* i, pp. 182-223. They are by no means in agreement, especially on the matter of Drake's personal responsibility.

weather and left the fleet when the Queen's ships made light of it; and the accounts of the fighting show that the regular Navy did all the real work and the others little but to swell the bill and the death-roll from disease.

In July 1589 Hawkins submitted to Burghley a plan for the conduct of the war which he had already shown to Walsingham in the previous year. He had in fact first drafted it in December 1587, and the remark above cited on land operations had been contained in it. He proposed a continuous blockade by maintaining on the seas between Spain and the Azores a squadron of six of the Queen's principal ships and six smaller ones. The squadron should stay out four months and then be succeeded by another of the same composition. The first squadron on being relieved would come home to refit and then go out and similarly relieve the second squadron. By this means the enemy convoys from the West and East Indies would be captured or prevented from sailing at all. The two ocean squadrons would account for half of the Queen's Navy, leaving the other half in reserve for emergencies near home.

We may believe that the Navy was capable of finding this service. Hawkins was an authority on the subject, and he was never unduly sanguine. Whether it would have been successful depended on two questions: would the blockading squadron substantially stop the flow of treasure to Spain, and would that stoppage compel Spain to make peace? On the latter head opinion, both English and foreign, was unanimous: Philip II could not carry on without his colonial surplus; and his own actions show without a doubt that such was his own belief. On the former question, whether the blockaders would be strong enough for their task, the answer prob-

ably is that in 1589-90 they would have been, for after the Armada all was ruin and confusion in the Spanish marine. From 1591 onwards Philip gradually built up a new navy, and a much better one than that of 1588. But he did so only by virtue of the western treasure, and Hawkins contended strongly that without the treasure there could be no Spanish revival. The validity of Hawkins's plan cannot be positively judged, for it was never put into practice.¹

Hawkins appears to have had his plan sanctioned after considerable delay and was able to get his first squadron ready to sail by February 1590. Already eighteen months had been wasted since the defeat of the Armada. In the latter part of 1589 the Earl of Cumberland had been sent to the Azores with only one Queen's ship and some privateers, very ill supplied. Even with this small force he compelled the *flota* of New Spain to take refuge in the port of Angra, and there it remained until the Earl was at the end of his tether and obliged to sail for England. If Hawkins's scheme had been in operation, the relieving squadron would have taken over the blockade, and the *flota* would have been held up indefinitely. Actually it continued its voyage after Cumberland's departure, and most of it got safely home. A single vessel of this convoy which Cumberland did take was worth £100,000, or one-quarter of the annual revenue of England.² However, substantially Philip had the Mexican treasure of

¹ Corbett's remark that Hawkins's plan was tried and found wanting shows misapprehension of its nature. Its essence was continuity, and it was not tried. The blockade was never in operation for more than six months in any year, and generally less. The aggregate of periods when the treasure route was unwatched considerably exceeds that of the periods when English forces were cruising.

² The profit was unrealised, the prize being wrecked on the English coast.

1589. The other great convoy, the *galeones* which brought the Peruvian trade, came some months later, and Hawkins drove his preparations hard in the hope of intercepting it. And then, on 23 February 1590, he was forbidden to sail. His plan was abandoned on rumours of Spanish ships gathering at Corunna and a Spanish army preparing for Brittany. It was exactly for such a contingency that he was leaving half the Navy out of his ocean blockade. Next month the treasure fleet, estimated to be worth five million ducats, duly reached Spain, and Philip had the wherewithal to refit his navy.

Not only this, but part of the 1590 treasure also came through before the gap was closed. In June Hawkins was sent out, not for the task that he had in mind, but to watch Corunna and the Spanish move on Brittany. At the same time Frobisher took the true blockading squadron, victualled for four months, to the Azores. He arrived to find that several of the King's new treasure-frigates had got through shortly before. Frobisher remained about the islands until his four months' victuals were consumed, and then Hawkins, who had victualled himself for six months, was allowed to take his place, to be called home at the end of October on a new alarm about Brittany. The effect of this cruising was that Philip II sent word to the West to countermand the sailing of any more shipping for Spain until 1591, when two years' trade had accumulated in the Caribbean ports. It may be said that the transactions of 1589-90 had shown that the blockade was able to stop the convoys, and also that unless the blockade was continuous the treasure would get through. It had not been continuous, and the result was to be made ominously apparent in 1591.

The Queen had treated Drake badly by attaching crippling conditions to his Lisbon venture. She treated Hawkins badly by blaming him for the partial failure of the blockade. He had been at sea, and he had not captured a *flota*. A discrepancy in dates was not allowed to impair the argument, and he was not sent to sea again until 1595. He continued as Treasurer of the Navy, in which post he was indispensable, and in these years there was much activity in new construction. But the Navy was scarcely employed after 1591. It was being built up to counter a new Armada, which was also being built up during its inactivity.

In 1591 Lord Thomas Howard was sent to the Azores, with Sir Richard Grenville as his vice-admiral. They had six of the best of the Queen's fighting ships, three of the pinnace type, and some auxiliaries, and the prize at stake was the double convoy from the West, which Philip must receive or financially perish. In 1589 Philip had been unable to send a fleet to sea. Late in 1590 he had turned out twenty ships, not all combatants, to counter Hawkins, but they had been driven back by a gale. In 1591 he was able to send forth Alonso de Bazan with fifty-five vessels, over twenty of them being formidable fighting craft. Bazan's mission was to drive the English from the Azores and escort the convoys home; and as a further precaution orders were sent to the West that the treasure still to be shipped should not come in the great fleet, but should follow later in the fast vessels specially designed for its transport. Some of the treasure had already come home in this manner early in 1591 before Howard got to sea. It would not have done so unchallenged if the blockade had been maintained throughout the year. While Howard was making for the Azores, the Earl of

Cumberland cruised on the Spanish coast with one Queen's ship and some privateers.

Endurance was the deciding factor in the success of all those arrangements. Howard went to sea in mid-April, and by the end of August he had reached the limit which Hawkins had foreseen as probable. After four-and-a-half months his crews were sickly, his ships foul within and without, and his victuals short. Yet the great convoys had not appeared, and he was hanging on, dangerously weak, in the hope that they would. At the same time Bazan, whether by dilatoriness or design, got to sea only in August, and was thus fresh and strong when the crisis developed. Cumberland was then also at the end of his resources. With only one strong ship he could not stop Bazan, but he sent a pinnace to warn Howard, and the warning came only a few hours in advance of the peril. Howard was at anchor off the northern end of Flores, camping his sick on shore, filling casks and changing ballast. This last was a measure of sanitation, for it was impossible to prevent the refuse from cooking and other foulness from lodging immovably among the stones in the ship's hold, and the only remedy was to throw out the dirty ballast, clean the bilges and take in fresh stones or sand from the beach. To be caught and obliged to fight during this process was a grave disadvantage, for ships not fully ballasted lost much of their sailing power.

What actually took place in the ensuing Battle of Flores has hitherto been wrapped in uncertainty, for Raleigh's *True Report*, the chief English authority, is not naval history but journalistic war-propaganda. An intelligible account has now been made available by the research of Mr. A. L. Rowse, who has obtained a copy of a manuscript relation by a Spanish officer present at

the fight.¹ From this it appears that Bazan approached from Terceira with an easterly wind and intended to divide his fleet at the southern end of Flores, sending one part up the west side of the island and the other up the east. Howard would thus be caught in his anchorage by two forces, both greatly superior, and prevented from escaping either way, since the smaller isle of Corvo lay to the northward. Delays in his passage and the fear lest Howard might be warned in time caused Bazan to change his purpose. He attacked the English with his whole fleet from the eastern side. Howard, outmatched by at least four to one in ships and men and incalculably more in condition and fitness, could only retreat. He did so by sailing close-hauled to the north-eastwards, with the advancing Spaniards threatening to pin him against the coast of Corvo. With five of his fleet Howard just weathered the Spaniards, and got clear to windward. Sir Richard Grenville in the *Revenge*, whose duty as vice-admiral was to bring up the rear, came last. The leading Spaniards thrust across his bows, stopped him and surrounded him. Then followed the famous defence and capture of the *Revenge*, which Raleigh's account has rendered the best-known story in our naval history. Such is the outline of the Spanish relation, the only one by an actual eyewitness known to exist. It is business-like and objective and does not enter into Grenville's motives in following his admiral instead of turning and running westwards away from both fleets. For so acting Grenville was bitterly attacked by Sir William Monson, who wrote from hearsay thirty years later. Some modern historians have rather uncritically repeated Monson's

¹ A. L. Rowse, *Sir Richard Grenville of the 'Revenge'* (London, 1937). This full life of Grenville, a work long overdue, embodies deep research and brilliant writing. It is indispensable to any serious study of the events of this period.

views as though they were established facts, and have disregarded the views of Sir Richard Hawkins, who also was not present but who believed that Grenville was fully justified. Contemporary advocacy is thus balanced for and against Grenville, and no modern is competent to pronounce judgment, for the essential data are not on record.¹

Soon afterwards the great fleets from the West began to arrive in straggling order, and Bazan waited to gather all under his flag and shepherd them home; for the seas were swarming with unattached privateers, and many vessels of the *flotas* had already been taken. Before he was ready to leave, a great storm swept the Azores, and it was said by Linschoten and others that more than half of the 140 sail collected there were lost. Howard also was still in the neighbourhood and captured several. But he could not stay much longer, and after his departure the second consignment of 1591 treasure came through unscathed.

Could the English government have read these facts aright it would have applied its energies seriously to giving Hawkins a chance. He had at least proved one of his points, that squadrons of the regular Navy could keep the sea more than twice as long as the unorganised assemblies which had preceded them. But the Queen was greatly perturbed by the loss of the *Revenge*, the only ship of hers taken in this war. She lost all spirit for a naval offensive, which indeed would now have required

¹ Raleigh passes lightly over the topic, giving no details of times, positions or the orders in force. In any case his purpose was not tactics but to whip up patriotic emotion. The Dutchman Linschoten, then far away at Terceira, interviewed survivors but also failed to record professional data. He printed what purports to be the dying speech of Grenville, and also circulated the story that Grenville was in the habit of chewing and swallowing broken glass, an obvious myth.

greater forces than when it was first proposed. A peril near home preoccupied her, that of the Spanish army in France, and she was inclined to let Philip re-create his navy in peace and reserve her own to ward off its attack when the time came. In the following years she left the Azores station increasingly to the privateers. In 1592 there were only two of her ships in those waters, in 1593 two, in 1594 none. The privateers took the great *Madre de Dios* and destroyed another carrack, but the western treasure came safely home to Spain, for there were long intervals between the operations of the irregulars and the Spanish system of transmitting news was good.

The Spanish intervention in France began in 1590, the year after Henry of Navarre became legitimate king by the death of Henry III. The Catholic League was determined that the Huguenot should not reign. He was already receiving aid from England, and Philip II therefore sent troops to assist the League, which he had patronised ever since its foundation. Not only did Parma from the Netherlands make two incursions into France at critical junctures in 1590 and 1592, but Philip sent 3000 men from Spain to occupy the port of Blavet in Brittany. He meant to extend his hold to Brest and the entire province, and the Queen and her ministers took the threat as seriously as if he had entered Ireland; for here would be the Channel stronghold which the last Armada had lacked. Elizabeth therefore sent Sir John Norreys to Brittany and the Earl of Essex to Normandy with some thousands of men to serve Henry of Navarre. They did so expensively but ineffectively, for the Spanish menace was not removed; and expense and menace together were the excuse for not employing the fleet in the Atlantic. In 1594 the Spaniards moved against Henry's city of Brest and built a fort at Crozon

in order to command the entrance to its port. The Queen sent Frobisher with a fleet and an army under Norreys to root them out. In November the English stormed the fort of Crozon, and thenceforward Brest was safe and the Brittany Spaniards appeared less dangerous. The veteran Frobisher, old in service but only fifty-six in years, was shot at Crozon and returned to Plymouth to die. He was rough and uncourtly and lacked the art of publicity, but the Queen liked and trusted him. His naval services have probably not been appreciated at their true value, but, partly through his own taciturnity, the materials for estimating them are scanty.

The increase in Spanish power at sea, coupled with the Queen's unwillingness to employ the Navy at its full strength, were undermining the favourable position in which the country found itself after the Armada. To many it seemed that the remedy lay in the type of enterprise that Drake had so brilliantly conducted in 1585, the raiding of the West Indies by an expedition which should be in effect a privateering concern and employ a minimum of the Navy's force. As early as the winter of 1592-93 Drake was in London discussing the matter, and Hawkins was also engaged in it. It went no further at that time, but immediately after the foiling of the Spanish design upon Brest it came to the stage of action, and in December 1594 Drake and Hawkins were beginning their preparations. The plan at this date was to land a small army at Nombre de Dios and send it across the Isthmus to capture Panama. Twenty years earlier, as we have seen, this had been capable of producing decisive results. But the circumstances were now less favourable. Spain had more troops at Panama and in Peru, and armed shipping in addition; and the

Cimaroons of the Isthmus, who had been the reliance of Drake and Oxenham, had now been punished and subjected. Some of this increase of strength was unknown in England. Richard Hawkins had tragically experienced it in the summer of 1594, but news of his disaster had not yet come home.

Drake and John Hawkins were appointed joint commanders with equal authority. No adequate reason has been forthcoming for an arrangement that was unusual and obviously risky. We know that Drake with his principles of command could never have suggested it. We know also that Hawkins, whose health was bad, had given up the desire for further service at sea, although he held himself always at the Queen's disposal. Perhaps the Lord Admiral insisted that as the Navy ships were to be the backbone of the force an officer of the Navy Board must hold command. But it is only a likelihood; there is no evidence. The division of authority was complete, even to administrative matters. Either commander engaged his own men and separately victualled his own half of the fleet, and the difference in their methods had afterwards a crucial effect on the fortune of the voyage. The financial arrangements were those common in privateering—one-third of the proceeds to go to the owners of the ships, one-third to those finding the victuals, and one-third as payment to the men. On these terms the Queen provided six fighting galleons, and private owners about twenty-one vessels large and small. Drake and Hawkins were responsible for the pay and victuals, but undoubtedly had sub-partners to share the risk.

Although all this was sanctioned in December, and the ships were assembled at Plymouth in April 1595, it was August before they were ready to sail. The delay

is another unexplained matter. There are hints of adverse influences in the Council and of spies reporting to Philip II that the expedition would never sail, but on the other hand the Lord Admiral blamed the commanders for the delay. It was not consistent with the record of either of them. By the first week of August they were ready, and then further delay was imposed by the Queen. A small Spanish force from Brittany sailed across the Channel, landed in Cornwall and burnt the villages of Mousehole, Newlyn and Penzance, and slipped away again before the commanders at Plymouth could round them up. It was a feat always possible but never done before, and the Queen was greatly upset. She sought to impose new duties on the expedition, of reconnoitring the Spanish ports and cruising off the Irish coast. The commanders replied that with their type of force the thing could not be done without abandoning all hope of proceeding westwards, and that it would be a breach of faith to the investors. The wrangle occupied three weeks before the Queen gave way. She was worried about the indications of a new Armada in preparation. At length she consented that the fleet should sail directly for the West Indies, provided that the commanders would promise to be home within six months. They were able to agree because a piece of information had come in which completely changed their purpose. In the previous March the flagship of the homeward-bound plate-fleet had been disabled in a gale and had put into San Juan de Porto Rico with two million ducats on board. She was virtually a wreck and the treasure was still there, waiting for transport to be sent from Spain. Drake and Hawkins therefore decided that Porto Rico should be their objective. Success in cutting out the treasure would

depend on outsailing the ships which Philip would undoubtedly send to the rescue, and on surprising a stronghold which, if warned, could make a good defence. With that purpose they sailed on 28 August. They knew that Philip was fitting out a fleet to foil them, although it had not yet sailed; and speed on their part was indispensable.

Four days out from Plymouth Drake revealed that he had engaged 300 more men than his proper quota and that his victuals were insufficient to carry them across the Atlantic. He proposed that Hawkins should pool both men and victuals. Hawkins was very angry. He had always prided himself on providing properly for his crews, and this meant that they would go short. He refused after some painful speeches had passed. A week later Drake again said that he could not proceed without supplies. He proposed to obtain them by raiding the Canaries, capturing Las Palmas, and levying a ransom in foodstuffs. Hawkins bitterly resisted, since any delay might be fatal to their purpose in the West. The breach threatened to split the expedition, for Drake was set upon going to the Canaries and Hawkins declared that he would sail direct for Porto Rico. Sir Thomas Baskerville, the general of the soldiers, seeing that anything would be better than this, sided with Drake and set himself to win over Hawkins. He at length succeeded, although Hawkins regarded it as folly and the voyage as ruined from that moment. Having arrived at Las Palmas, the expedition found it too well defended and the weather too bad for an attack to be attempted, but on the other side of Grand Canary some men went on shore and were captured. The Spaniards thus learned that the fleet was bound for the West, and immediately sent off a warning in a fast

vessel to Porto Rico. The English, having obtained no victuals, made the Atlantic passage nevertheless. It seems that Hawkins shared his supplies with Drake.

On the other side of the ocean the rendezvous was Guadeloupe, which the fleet reached in a scattered condition. At the same time there arrived in those waters the first of the relief forces from Spain, five of the armed treasure frigates sent to bring away the stuff from Porto Rico. They captured a small English vessel and found written instructions which her captain had omitted to destroy. These showed that the English were about to attack Porto Rico. The five Spanish ships made all haste thither, and their guns and crews became available for the defence. They had sailed from Spain after the English had left Plymouth, but the delay at the Canaries had allowed them to get ahead. This year 1595 showed the traditional qualities of the two sides reversed: the Spanish movements were brisk and decided, the English dilatory in the extreme. The next delay was due not to Drake but to Hawkins. Drake wished to order a general chase of the five Spaniards, but Hawkins insisted on staying to put the fleet in fighting condition after its two months at sea, in case it should fall in with the larger fleet Philip was known to be preparing. At this point Hawkins fell seriously ill and took no further part in the command.

Porto Rico, thus doubly warned and reinforced, was prepared for a stout resistance. It was held by troops and colonial militia greatly outnumbering the English, and beat off a determined assault by Drake with severe casualties to his men. As the fleet came to anchor for the attack Sir John Hawkins died. His loss was keenly felt by many and added to the gloom of the defeat. At the time of his death he was convinced that the voyage was

overthrown and added to his will a codicil leaving the Queen two thousand pounds as some reparation for her losses. Drake put a good face on the failure, and as he turned his back on the two million ducats exclaimed, 'I will bring you to twenty places far more wealthy and easier to be gotten'.

He was going now to attempt Panama, but first stood over to the Main and made the old tour of its seaports. At Rio de la Hacha he gained some booty, at Santa Marta none, and Cartagena was too strong to be attacked. Then he took Nombre de Dios without difficulty and landed Baskerville for the march across the Isthmus. Within four days Baskerville was back, having encountered a strongly posted Spanish force and been heavily repulsed. Even to Drake things looked black. The Indies were very different from his last memory of them ten years before. Spaniards were now well-armed, ready and efficient, and the magic mirror was dimmed. He spoke of attempting the Honduras coast, but contrary winds prevented it. Sickness was ravaging the force, and for the first time Drake himself fell ill. On the night of 27 January 1596 he died as the fleet lay in the bay of Porto Bello. He was not much over fifty years of age. Hawkins had been sixty-three. Both had lived full and fruitful lives and had died more sadly than they deserved.

Baskerville the soldier led the broken expedition home, and on the way fought a creditable action off the western end of Cuba with the superior fleet that Philip had sent in chase. Drake in all his voyages had never met a fighting fleet in the Caribbean. The Age was truly passing, and something new was taking its place.

Spain was overjoyed at the news of Drake's death, but her own awakening had come too late. Her effort

had been inspired rather by despair than hope, and she could not make head against the exhaustion of three wars. In the Netherlands Parma was dead, and his successors had no prospect of ever conquering the Dutch; the most they could do was to hold what he had saved, the southern Belgic provinces. In France Henry of Navarre declared himself a Catholic and so checkmated the Catholic League. He beat it in the field and restored peace and unity after thirty years of strife. Philip had to acknowledge the end in that quarter by the Peace of Vervins in 1598. On the seas fortune went steadily against him. In 1596 it seemed that the spirit of Drake was still alive when the Lord Admiral with Essex and Raleigh fell upon Cadiz, burnt the shipping, and sacked the town. It was the last bold stroke of the English, but the Spanish effort was finished too. Thenceforward the tale is of futilities. Philip, in spite of Cadiz, sent forth a fleet for the Channel late in the year, but storms drove it back. In 1597 Essex and Raleigh cruised to the Azores, but missed the plate-fleets by dissension and ill-luck. Again Philip despatched an Armada—the last—and again the winds scattered it. Next year he died, conscious of failure, the Protestant powers against whom he had warred still intact. The great struggle with England was in fact decided, but it seemed that not even the energy to make peace was left. So it dragged on until last of all the Queen died in 1603 and her successor did what was needed in signing the Treaty of Westminster with Philip III.

The Treaty in effect registered nothing but the cessation of the war. The true results of the great half-century are to be looked for elsewhere. In its most important aspect the Anglo-Spanish war had been part of a European conflict, of the Protestants against the Counter-

Reformation, and as such it had an immense effect upon the destinies of Europe. But in the expansion of England overseas the war had been an interruption, giving check for twenty years to the enterprises which Elizabethan England was eager to undertake. After it was over they were resumed by new men, but by methods which the Elizabethans themselves had shown signs of developing before the national peril diverted their efforts.

What, then, had the heroes of this book achieved?

First, it is very evident that they had awakened a national consciousness of the great world and an ambition to exploit it. In the days of Henry VIII there had been no public interest in anything outside Europe. Of the few English writings on expansion none came into print save a play by John Rastell, which contained some passages on North America. The first real populariser of such knowledge was Richard Eden, who worked in the reigns of Edward VI and Mary and, appropriately enough, dedicated his first effort to the Duke of Northumberland. Thenceforward there was a steady and increasing stream of publications from the English press, translations and original works on geography, navigation and exploration. By the time Elizabeth had reigned ten years any description of a distant land was sure to find readers; and the period closed with the mighty three-volume collection of Richard Hakluyt, which to this day is the most widely read work of its kind in the English tongue, as numerous modern reprints and selections sufficiently testify. In half a century the thinking public had been converted from indifference to eager interest. Nor was this interest solely, or even mainly, due to the work of the scholars, honourable as their share was. English thought, then as nearly always since, linked itself to the

concrete; and any attempt to popularise world-study would have fallen flat had not men of action been facing perils in order to see the new conditions for themselves. Eden's books were sold to a public which was already discussing the formation of the Muscovy Company and hearing rumours that gold had been brought home from Africa. Dee circulated his manuscripts among influential people who were quietly arranging to discover Terra Australis. Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages* and *Discourse of Western Planting* were an integral part of the actions of Gilbert and the Virginia pioneers; and his first *Principal Navigations* came out during the flush of English self-confidence that followed the rout of the Armada. The English people in full force had accepted the doctrine that their future lay upon the oceans.

The seamen and their captains had in the same time done much for themselves. In the few distant enterprises of the early Tudor period it had been almost axiomatic that no Englishman was competent to explore across the ocean without the guidance of some cunning man from Latin Europe. The Venetian Cabots and Portuguese captains from the Azores had led the first Bristol voyages to the New Found Land. John Rastell had relied on native talent and had got no farther west than Ireland. Henry VIII's skipper John Rut had with him a mysterious Italian pilot. Old William Hawkins in the same reign may have been his own navigator to Guinea and Brazil, but we cannot be sure; there are hints of Frenchmen in the background. Certainly Wyndham was guided to the Gold Coast by a Portuguese, and John Hawkins on his first voyage had a Spanish pilot for the Caribbean. But after 1550 the rule speedily became the exception. Willoughby and

Chancellor broke new ground unaided in the North East. In his second and third voyages Hawkins had no assistance in leading English squadrons for the first time along the Spanish Main and into the Gulf of Mexico. Drake cheerily impressed foreign pilots when he could catch them, but was quite prepared to do without; and his most difficult feat of navigation, the threading of the East Indian Archipelago, was the achievement of his own wit alone. Frobisher found the way to Baffin Land for himself. John Davis, the prince of navigators, had no need of foreign help to achieve the farthest north of his century or to lead his survivors to safety amid the perils of the southern ocean. The half-century of progress ends with Lancaster making the Cape passage to the Far East. In the early Tudor period the Latins alone had done such things, and Englishmen had been convinced that only the Latins could do them. The Elizabethans broke the inhibition.

The Royal Navy, as we have seen, became a fighting force of a new type. Hawkins showed how honest administration and attention to detail could much more than double the efficiency of the fleet. Drake showed how an undivided command could produce a lightning speed of action which no man, foreign or English, had hitherto dreamt of. Those two and many other captains taught their crews to believe that English seamen need fear no others on equal terms or even at moderate odds. Raleigh in his *True Report* of Grenville's fight cast the tradition into deathless prose, and it never died, even in the bad half-century that followed under the early Stuart kings. When the ineptitude of Charles I's courtiers had reduced performance to its worst, it seemed natural for an appeal to the glorious past to bear the title *Sir Francis Drake Reviv'd*. Under such a

régime revival was impossible, but the tradition was not forgotten. With the Commonwealth Blake revived it, and thenceforward there was no break.

Business men and mercantile statesmen learned much in the period—the efficiency of the joint-stock company in opening distant trades, the need for study of geography in all its branches if markets were to be captured, the principle that overseas expansion would make wealth not only for a few adventurers but for the people at large. Colonisation as a remedy for unemployment was an absolutely new conception; Hakluyt and his fellows were the first to discern that pioneers across the ocean would be the means for needy Englishmen at home to be ‘set on work’ instead of being hanged for stealing bread. And from their observation of Spain’s strength and weakness they slowly drew the glimmerings of another economic truth, that gold was not everything and that the kindly fruits of the earth might ultimately be better worth tillage.

Finally, the maritime traditions thus graved into the national consciousness were a factor of the utmost importance in preserving the liberties of England. Had the energy of the age turned to continental conquest and produced, as conceivably it might, some short-lived hegemony of Western Europe, militarism might well have become the English way of life. Out of militarism grows despotism, and civic liberty decays. That might have been the English path, and the whole world to-day have been unimaginably different, but for the achievements of the Age this book has described, and of the great men whose spirits blazed in such a galaxy as was never seen in England before, nor has been since.

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